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The BOOKMAN

A Revue of Life and Letters

"The Sisters" An Unfinished Story by

JOSEPH CONRAD

WHY I PREFER TO LIVE IN A SMALL TOWN
by Emily Newell Blair

SONNETS TO CRAIG by George Sterling

A TELEPHONE CALL by Dorothy Parker

THE SKULL OF SWIFT by Shane Leslie

MUSIC IN THE DISTANCE by Abbe Niles

Edited by
BURTON RASCOE

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JANUARY, 1928 VOL. LXVI, NO. 5

The BOOKMAN

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Announcing —

BOSTON

A CONTEMPORARY HISTORICAL NOVEL

by Upton Sinclair

We confidently predict that "Boston" will be the literary sensation of the decade. We are certain that it will rouse more enthusiasm and more denunciation than any book ever before written in America.

In "Boston" Upton Sinclair's powers as reporter, propagandist, and novelist unite and reach their full height. It is the crowning work in the phenomenal three-sided career that has kept Upton Sinclair's name before the public since his early twenties, that has made him be counted one of our half-dozen leading writers by every American critic, and that to foreign critics and readers has made him the greatest of all our authors.

When Sinclair was twenty-three he wrote "The Journal of Arthur Stirling", the most successful literary hoax of modern times. A few years later "The Jungle" swept the world with the intolerable horror of its revelations and the power of its presentation. "The Brass Check", Sinclair's onslaught on journalism, has been among the most influential of all modern books. "Oil!" is a nation-wide best-seller, after receiving universal critical acclaim. . . . These are only the high-spots in an amazingly prolific literary career that has resulted in thirty-five books and probably the largest audience of any living author.

BEGINNING IN

THE BOOKMAN

for February

We agree with Upton Sinclair in his prediction that "Boston" will have more readers than any of his previous books. Its theme and characters touch profoundly every literate American. And Sinclair's heart and soul are in the book — and a power even he has never shown before.

In some ways "Boston" is Sinclair's reply to the suppression of his novel "Oil!" in Boston last summer. But it is much more than that. It is a searching study of modern American life, and particularly of the great and dramatic battle that is being waged throughout the country, nowhere more bitterly than in Boston: the battle to the death between the fine old Puritan tradition, and the confused but irresistible influence of the huge mass of later arrivals to the country who are not easily converted to the older way of living.

This fight has been at its most intense in New England, and especially in Boston, the capital of America's first intellectual and cultural maturity. Time after time have the repercussions of the struggle — in industry, legislation, business, morals, the courts — been national front-page news; in textile and

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police strikes, in "red" raids, in book suppression, in exposures of corrupt business practices; and most notably of all in the trial and execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, a case that stirred the conscience and divided the opinion of the world. Boston, as Sinclair shows, has become a symbol of all the gravest problems that confront us as a nation.

In "Boston" Sinclair deals with events in and around Boston during the past twelve years. Actual happenings and actual people fill its pages. Sinclair has known Boston for twenty-five years; authenticity is stamped on every word. The book will not only make literary history; it will enter profoundly into the real history of our time.

Also Coming in the February BOOKMAN:

On Some Unpublished Letters of George Meredith
by R. E. Gordon George

Intimate letters written by Meredith, when he was sixty, to a young French girl. In them, as the editor of the correspondence says, "he pours himself out in reflection on politics, on literature, and on that relation of love to life and of a dear woman to them both which was the constant magnet of his genius". Included in the correspondence is a fine poem not before printed.

Selling the Body Beautiful *by Dorrance L. Jameson*

The spectacular rise of the "art magazines", their dark days, and their later stabilization at huge circulations and profits.

Julian Green *by Edmond Jaloux*

Swift and Vanessa *by Shane Leslie*

The Dilemma of the American Jew *by Florence Kiper Frank*

Mr. Wogglebaum Cooks an Opera *by Roy McCardell*

THE FIRST OF THE PRIZE STORIES
IN THE BOOKMAN'S
NEWS-STORY CONTEST

A department devoted to POPULAR MUSIC, *old and new,*
by Abbe Niles, begins in February

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In the BOOKMAN OFFICE

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

AMERO, who came from Mexico City two years ago, immediately commanded attention by his drawing of "Masks" which appeared regularly in the theatrical columns of *The Times*, *The Tribune* and *The Sun*. What Amero calls masks are really unmasked portraits of celebrities as this keen Mexican sees them.

We acquired the manuscript of "The Sisters" by JOSEPH CONRAD from the administrators of the estate of the late John Quinn, lawyer and patron of the arts. Mr. Quinn was perhaps the most notable of all the connoisseurs of contemporary art in that he was able to recognize genius long before that genius was generally acknowledged by the critics and to risk his money in the purchase of works of art which "authorities" denounced as trash. He bought canvases by Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh and Matisse, and the work of many other modern sculptors and painters when they were under fire from the academic critics, and as the years went by he saw his acquisitions rise precipitately in value. So, also, he was a patron of literature who spent his time in discovering genius among the living instead of collecting rare first editions of poets and prose writers long dead. He was one of the first to recognize the worth of Conrad and, for a time, by an arrangement with Conrad he bought the manuscript of each new novel that Conrad wrote and advanced Conrad money whenever he was in need of it. The amount he paid Conrad was often in excess of the amount Conrad was able immediately to secure in royalties; so Mr. Quinn served materially to lessen the struggles that Conrad had in earning a living with his pen. That Mr. Quinn's critical sense was also great business acumen is testified to by the fact that after Mr. Quinn's death his Conrad manuscripts alone brought over $110,000 at auction. His paintings, many of which he acquired at very low figures, brought at auction over $300,000. Other items — first editions, inscribed books, letters, etc. — brought up a grand total. The manuscript of "The Sisters" is one of the two unfinished stories by Conrad that have so far been brought to light.

FORD MADOX FORD, who contributes a commentary upon "The Sisters" to this issue and tells what Conrad planned to do with the story, was associated with Conrad throughout the latter's writing life and in the early part of Conrad's career was his daily intimate, advisor, and collaborator. Ford has written a study of Conrad that is a masterpiece of portraiture and a most unusual contribution to literary biography. Himself one of the finest novelists of our time, Ford has used in that study somewhat the same creative methods he applies to a character in a novel. Critics, dazzled by the great fame and popularity that Conrad finally achieved before he died, have not only resented the plain truth of Ford's book on Conrad but have written sarcastically of Ford's "presumption" in relating the facts of their association. That plain truth was that, at the time Conrad went to Ford for literary help and advice, Ford was already a famous man, not only because he was a

THE BOOKMAN

BURTON RASCOE, *Editor*

SEWARD COLLINS, *Publisher and Associate Editor*

Dorothea Brande, Managing Editor; George G. Livermore, Circulation Manager; Ethel Kelley, Advertising Manager.

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The Carter's Wench
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writer of excellent novels couched in a polished style but because his family was prominent in the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood whereas Conrad was unknown; and the facts were that not only was Ford by way of being able to help the Polish seaman in mastering the difficulties of English prose but was also able to get him a hearing with the publishers that might otherwise have been more difficult. Ford, then, is perhaps the only man in the world qualified to comment with authority upon "The Sisters" and to tell us what the story might have become had Conrad lived to complete it. It was Conrad's habit to put aside the manuscript of a novel he had begun when he encountered great difficulties and to begin another one. Thus some of them were in the process of being written over a period of ten or twelve years. Conrad frequently discussed the plans of his novels with Ford, and we are especially fortunate in having this adumbration of an unfinished masterpiece. Ford is now in New York. He has just paid a tribute to this city in a book called "New York is Not America" and he is finishing the fourth volume of the tetrology which includes, "Some Do Not", "No More Parades", and "A Man Could Stand Up."

EDWIN MUIR first came to notice by the brilliant articles he contributed to *The New Age*, in London, when that magazine was under the inspired editorship of A. R. Orage. Mr. Muir is now living in Germany, where he devotes his time mainly to the writing of poetry and criticism. Four volumes of his work have been published in this country by the Viking Press: "The Marionettes", "Transition", "First Poems", and "Latitudes".

We have had poems from DOROTHY PARKER in THE BOOKMAN, but "A Telephone Call" is her first piece of prose in our pages. In "A Telephone Call" she uses her "interior monologue" technique for the first time in entire seriousness, instead of in the humorous and satiric manner with which she has delighted the readers of *Life* and *The New Yorker*.

SHANE LESLIE published his first volume in 1908, "Songs of Oriel". Since then he has written a succession of novels, books of verse, historical and biographical studies, anthologies, and translations. To George the Fourth and Cardinal Newman he has devoted a volume each. With Francis Birrell he has translated Plato's Symposium. In 1925 he published "An Anthology of Catholic Poets". In the September number of THE BOOKMAN Mr. Leslie told of the suppression of his novel "The Cantab", and how it drove him nearly to suicide. Next month we shall have from Mr. Leslie another study of Dean Swift, dealing with Swift's relations with Vanessa.

RICHARD ATWATER conducts a subtle and sprightly column in *The Chicago Evening Post* under the pseudonym "Riq", an abbreviation of "Riquarius", which was the name he signed to his contributions to the late Bert Leston Taylor's famous column in *The Chicago Tribune*. Mr. Atwater was something of a prodigy at the University of Chicago and was one of Professor Paul Shorey's favorite pupils in Greek. He specialized in Greek comedy and was graduated with high honors. He put his knowledge to work by writing skits for vaudeville for a year when he was called to war. On his return he taught at the University of Minnesota, resigning that position to conduct the column offered him on *The Post*. He has published a volume of verse called "Rickety Rimes". It is related in "Who's Who" that he is a member of the Royal Bengal Bicycle Club.

ABBE NILES, a graduate of Trinity College and Rhodes scholar from New Hampshire, collaborated with W. C. Handy on "Blues", an anthology of Negro secular music. In recent years he has contributed to a number of magazines on musical subjects. In quoting an opinion in our November number we said it was from "Abbe Niles, than whom there is no greater authority on modern music". A letter from Mr. Niles says he hopes he is the first to deny this claim, as "modern music" to him means Stravinsky and other similar composers. It is with *popular* music, new and old, that he concerns himself. Next month THE BOOKMAN begins publishing a

(*Continued on page XII*)

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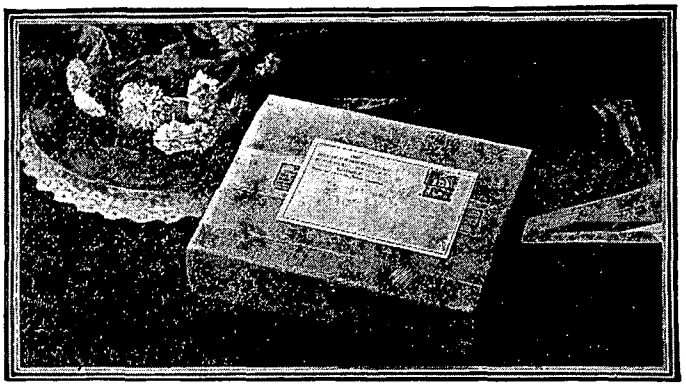

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THE arbiter of the news stories submitted in the contest for the month of November is Paul Patterson, editor of the *Sun* papers, Baltimore, Maryland. Among the many fine news stories sent in from all parts of the country, Mr. Patterson will select one. The story will be republished in THE BOOKMAN for February, with comment on the story by Mr. Patterson concerning the story's special merits. An award of $100 will go to the reporter who wrote the story and the story will be formally entered among the twelve stories to be voted upon by THE BOOKMAN'S jury of awards at the end of twelve months. THE BOOKMAN will award an additional $100 to the reporter that the whole jury deems to have written the best of the twelve news stories printed. In the case of a tie, this amount will be given to each of the winning contestants.

The jury consists of the following members, all of them trained newspaper men of the highest standing in their profession:

JULIAN HARRIS, *editor, Columbus, Georgia, Enquirer-Sun.*
JULIAN MASON, *editor-in-chief, New York Evening Post.*
PAUL PATTERSON, *editor, the Sun papers, Baltimore, Md.*
CLARKE SALMON, *managing editor, New Orleans Item.*
HENRY JUSTIN SMITH, *managing editor, Chicago Daily News.*
CASPER S. YOST, *editor, St. Louis Globe Democrat.*

City editors, managing editors and reporters on all newspapers throughout the country are urged to co-operate in making the contest comprehensive by sending us stories by members of their staff or stories they themselves have written, or stories that have been called to their attention.

In all cases two clippings of each story should be sent, with the date it appeared, the name of the newspaper in which it appeared, and the reporter's name plainly indicated. In cases where there has been collaboration, the name of the collaborator should also be given and the extent of his work indicated. In such cases the award will be shared by the collaborators in a manner specified by the juror.

One juror is sole arbiter for one month, another juror the next month, and so on. Stories are not to be sent to any individual juror direct, but addressed to:

Editor of THE BOOKMAN, 452 Fifth Avenue, New York City

Clippings for the month of January will now be received

THE ARBITER FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY WILL BE HENRY JUSTIN SMITH

[THE JANUARY STORY SELECTED WILL APPEAR IN THE MARCH ISSUE]

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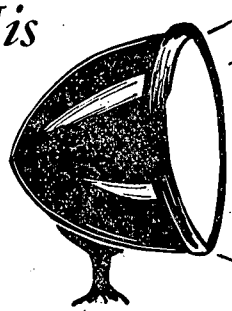

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(*Continued from page VIII*)
monthly department by Mr. Niles, devoted to popular music and related subjects.

EMILY NEWELL BLAIR has been active in politics as well as in literature. She has been a member of various Democratic National Committees and is the author of numerous stories and articles for the magazines. Her home is Joplin, Mo.

ELIAS TOBENKIN came to this country from Russia in his boyhood, worked in sweatshops and at various trades and supported himself at the University of Wisconsin, where he attained the degrees A.B., and A.M. He began his writing career as a reporter on *The Milwaukee Free Press*, and has since worked for various newspapers as editorial writer, foreign correspondent and special reporter. He has spent much time in Russia as a newspaper correspondent. He is also the author of four novels, "Witte Arrives", "The House of Conrad", "The Road" and "God of Might".

Successive letters from HENRY ALBERT PHILLIPS are postmarked Berlin, Vienna, Budapest and other cities all over Europe. He is engaged in visiting most of the leading figures in European letters and art, among whom he numbers many friends. His accounts of his wanderings and adventures appear in *The New York Times* and other periodicals.

Just nine years ago this month FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE began the present form of THE BOOKMAN'S Monthly Score, a department which has been followed with constantly increasing attention since its inception, providing as it does the most comprehensive and reliable estimate of what books the most people are reading throughout the country. In those nine years Mr. Stockbridge has witnessed great changes in the public reading taste, which have impelled him to set forth some conclusions in this article.

SERAVI is a young caricaturist of Spanish origin who comes to New York by way of Paris, where he gained considerable reputation. Through work appearing in *Vanity Fair* and elsewhere he is rapidly becoming known in this country.

MONTROSE J. MOSES, who reviews for this issue a group of books relating to the drama, has written of stage matters for various papers during the last twenty-five years. He has also written, translated, and edited a large number of books on his chosen subject. His lives of Ibsen and Maeterlinck are standard.

DON SEITZ has combined authorship with an active life in business. For twenty-five years he was the business manager of *The New York World*. He has written books on many subjects, including two in recent years that have been widely read and praised, his biographies of Artemas Ward and Joseph Pulitzer. In 1917, Mr. Seitz wrote a book on John Paul Jones, the subject of the volume he reviews for this issue.

* * *

It seems that we were in error in listing MISS ZOÉ BECKLEY and SAMUEL CROWTHER among the ghost-writers in our October issue. In the autobiography of Henry Ford, Mr. Crowther's name appears prominently on the cover as a collaborator with Mr. Ford. Miss Beckley writes:

"Ever since I returned from Roumania with the eight articles of Queen Marie (which articles were split into sixteen) I have been busy denying that I wrote them. I did not write them, nor any part of them. I copied them from her own handwriting, correcting the spelling as I typed them, and returning to her the original and one carbon copy of each story. Later on, she permitted me to keep some of the originals as souvenirs, and we still have them in our office. Queen Marie and I had a verbal pact that nothing in her articles was to be altered, added or deleted. We made this 'Notice to the Editors' when the stories were sent out, so as to be sure that my promise to her would be kept. I should hate to have her see THE BOOKMAN article, as she would naturally assume that the mis-statement came from me. We are still good friends and want to remain so."

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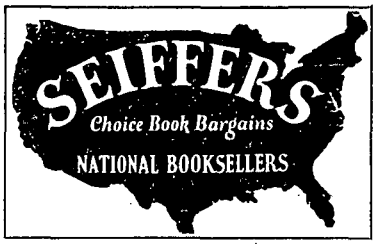

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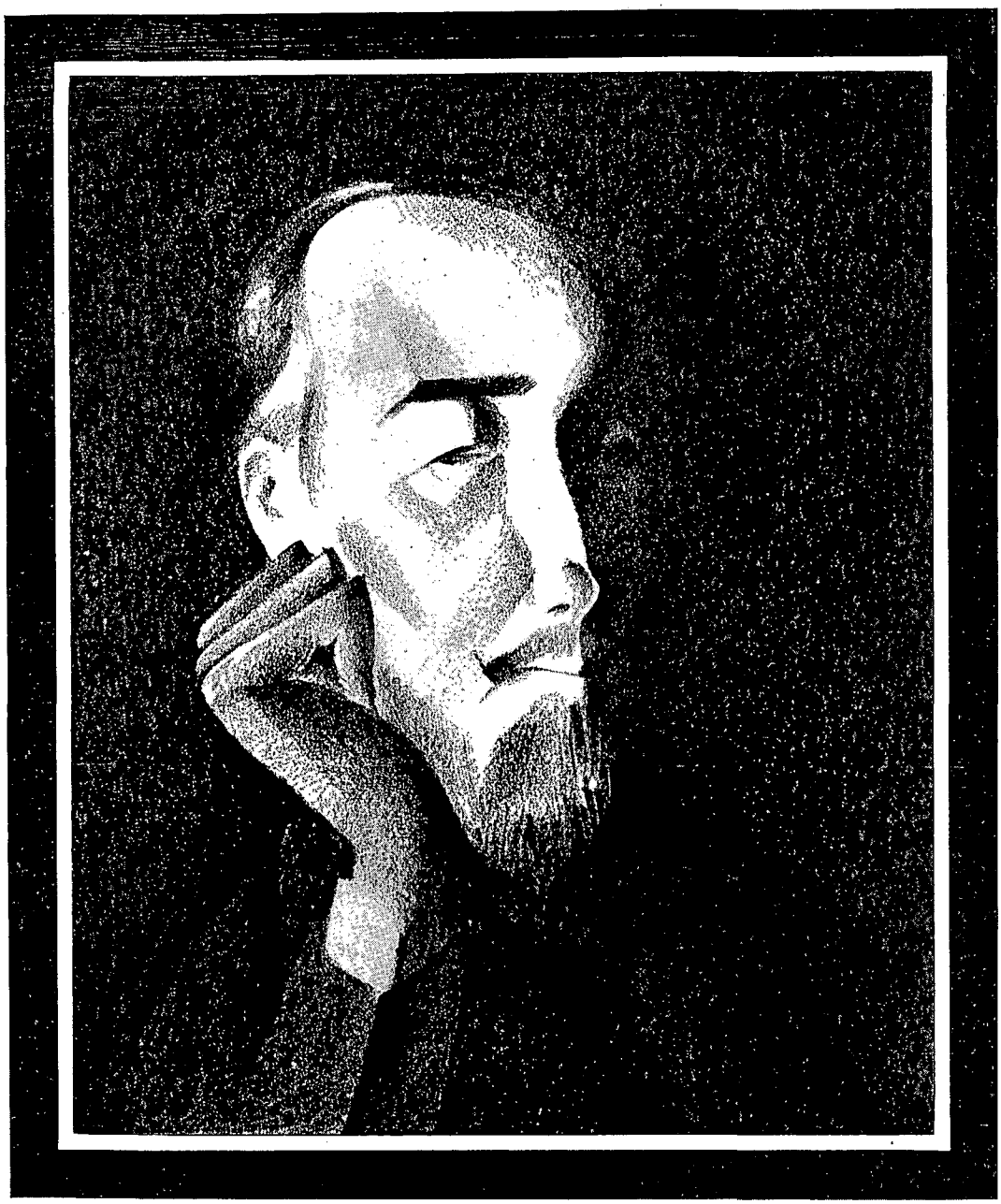

Joseph Conrad
By Amero

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JANUARY, 1928 VOLUME LXVI, NO. 5

The BOOKMAN

THE SISTERS

By Joseph Conrad

("The Sisters" is one of the two unfinished stories found among Conrad's papers after his death, the other being "Suspense", published two years ago. He had begun "The Sisters" in 1896, but put it aside, in accordance with his custom of postponing a piece of writing when another presented itself with more urgent appeal, or when need for money demanded his writing something that would bring immediate reward. Conrad turned from "The Sisters" to "The Nigger of the Narcissus", fully intending to finish the first but never doing so. During those years Conrad was closely associated with Ford Madox Ford, his friend and collaborator. Mr. Ford has written for THE BOOKMAN *a commentary on "The Sisters" and his recollection of Conrad's account of the problem he had set himself in the story. Mr. Ford's article immediately follows "The Sisters".)*

FOR many years Stephen had wandered amongst the cities of Western Europe. If he came from the East — if he possessed the inborn wisdom of the East — yet it must be said he was only a lonely and inarticulate Mage, without a star and without companions. He set off on his search for a creed — and found only an infinity of formulas. No angel's voice spoke from above to him. Instead, he heard, right and left, the vociferations of idle fanatics extolling this path or that with earthly and hoarse voices that rang out, untrustworthy, in empty darkness. And he heard also the soft murmur of lazy babblers whispering deferential promises of greatness in exchange for the generous hospitality of that Russian painter who had roubles. From Berlin to Dresden, from Dresden to Vienna, to many other places, then to cities of Italy, at last back to Munich he travelled on, trying to read a meaning into all the forms of beauty that solicited his admiration. He thought he understood the language of perfection. Did it not uplift his thoughts like the wind of heaven that sends sunward in a soaring cloud, the dust of the arid earth? But like the wind the meaning seemed to be elusive and formless. The sweetness of the voice intoxicated him with pure delight, but the message sounded as if delivered in declaration of incomprehensible things, with a reserve of final clearness, with an incompleteness of emotion that made him doubt the heavenly origin of that voice. The prodigies of chisel and brush transported him at first with the hope of a persuasion, of an unveiled religion of art — and then plunged him into despair by refusing to say the last word. He turned

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to men — to all kinds of men — and it seemed to him that similar to the angels and the devils of mediaeval cathedrals they were all carved of the same stone, that they were enigmatical, hard and without heart. Neither the dead nor the living would speak intelligibly to him. At times he mourned over his own want of intelligence. He believed that in the world of art, amongst so many forms of created beauty there could be found the secret of genius. All those brains that had produced so many masterpieces had left amongst them, hidden from the crowd, but visible to the elect, the expression of their creed: the one, the final, the appeasing. He looked for it; he looked for the magic sign in all the galleries — in all the cathedrals from Rome to Cologne. In many towns he lingered, sometimes alone, sometimes in the midst of other seekers whom he loved for the sake of their quest and whom he despised a little, because it seemed to him dishonest to accept — as they did — the disconnected mutterings of common men as the voice of inspired prophets. He despised those believers only a little and that not always. He had doubts. Instead of deceiving themselves to make life easy had they not perchance obtained that message which, year after year, eluded his longing? Who knows! He began to doubt his own aspirations. They presented themselves sometimes to him as a plot of the powers of darkness for the destruction of his soul. Then he would rush out of himself into the world. The western life captivated him by the amplitude of its complicated surface, horrified him by the interior jumble of its variegated littleness. It was full of endeavour, of feverish effort, of endless theories, of preconceived hates, of misplaced loves. It was all limited, hard, sharp in outline, unlovely in form. And so were the men. They boasted of the crystalline purity of their horizon. He saw that it was pure as crystal and as impenetrable; that under its dome there was nothing great because all was very finite, definite, bound to the earth, imprisoned within those so pellucid and so infamous walls on the other side of which there was the august world of the infinite, the Eternal; that other world always invoked by these men yet never desired, falsely extolled, worshipped, invoked by the lips — and always hopelessly remote from those unquiet hearts in which its mystery could awake nothing but secret fear, or more secret scorn.

But mostly he sought refuge from the reproach of his impotence in ardent work. This, consolatory in its assertion of what he could do, had its periods of discouragement too — by placing face to face with his limitations that man who strove after the illimitable. He would look to no one as teacher. He stood aloof from the world. But he took his stand in it. He had need of it. He had need to see the hollow enthusiasms and to hear the ring of empty words round him if for nothing else but to steady this wavering trust in his own convictions. Associating with many he communed with none. He was generally taciturn. People asked: "Who's that fellow? He does nothing. He does not even talk". Rarely they heard him and then answered their own question by the easy solution of an epithet: "Madman or humbug". The few who had seen his work assured the others that he was perfectly "impossible". Some said: "He is too rich to ever be anything". A few murmured the damning word of "Dreamer". Nobody quite said: "Fool". Almost all lived with him on terms of current friendship. The fellow had money and would never be dangerous; he had no talent. A verdict deadly and final like the knife of a guillotine. Only a small band of the good and the smart hated him. It is hard to say why, exactly. Either because he would not talk to them the jargon of the craft, or, more probably, a correct instinct of his value had been vouchsafed to them as a reward of so much smartness and so much virtue. Doubtless they would not have been so bitter and would have condescended at last to break his sumptuous bread had they known then how short his life, how faint his trace on the earth, was fated to be.

Far away beyond many great rivers in wood-built and dusty cities of the steppe, Stephen's father and mother waited for his letters. These came regularly four times

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a year. And for many days the father would carry the last missive in his bosom, somewhere inside his shirt, like a scapulary, because it was from his eldest son, from that son who had been destined in his thoughts to attain the rank of a general. The mother would weep silently with no other trouble but that of his absence. They were two peasants. She was the daughter of a Village Elder, from the banks of the Dnieper. He was a liberated man born in the neighborhood who had wandered away, shrewd and restless, from his hamlet and became afterwards, from very small beginnings, a merchant of the first guild — a very rich man. But however rich he always remained a peasant, a man with a beard. He was cunning, naïve, unscrupulous, believing and tender-hearted. He gave largely in charity and would sometimes stand on the steps of the church chatting with a beggar and calling him "Brother" without the slightest affectation, as a matter of course. All men are brothers. When reproving his two pale and scrofulous clerks (that was the extent of his establishment; he did almost everything himself) he prefaced his remarks by the exclamation: "Thou! son of a dog", without the faintest spark of animosity in his heart. He feared God, venerated the saints, bowed at every opportunity to holy images, crossed himself rapidly, with three bunched fingers, an incalculable number of times, on fitting occasions — and would perjure his soul for three roubles with an innocent smile, like a little child fibbing before an indulgent father. He obtained government contracts. He amassed money. He became known in the government offices — even in the capital — where he could be seen standing at the doors, cap in hand, with a propitiatory face. Bull-necked officials in tight green uniforms addressed him — from armchairs — with caressing condescension as: "Thou little thief! O! thou perfect liar". He was not spoiled by the commendation of the great. He gave bribes. He was greatly esteemed. He became necessary to many. He remained unassuming — the peasant of old days.

Theirs had been a love-match. She was the beauty of the village, daughter of a rich man; he was looked upon as a wandering ne'er-do-well of colossal presumption. They fell in love violently with each other. They ran away. They never regretted it. In the early days (when the passions are strong) he beat her a little once or twice, just to place firmly the fact of his affection beyond the possibility of even the most fleeting doubt. Ever after, he treated her in a grave contained manner, with a patriarchal superiority of indulgence. She thought of him as the greatest of men and of herself as the happiest of women. They passed through some hard times. The father-in-law, almost unforgiving, would do nothing for the vagabond beyond giving him an old wooden cart and a pair of shaggy and diminutive horses. In that equipage they hawked from town to town the watermelons of central Russia. The first child — the son Stephen — was born in the casual shelter of a roadside hut; and before he was a fortnight old they were again on the road. The woman sat, on some rotten mats, perched high in the sunlight on top of the pile of fruit. The man trudged with silent footsteps in bark shoes, by the drooping heads of his horses, and glanced over his shoulder at the mother from time to time. Sometimes the great weariness of the limitless expanse of the plain would penetrate his very soul. Then he would turn half round — not stopping — and shout cheerily: "How is our Kossak, Malanya; our brave boy?" And she would answer, from above the cloud of dust, in a high pitched — not yet a very strong voice: "He is getting on beautifully, Sydor!"

At night they often camped outside a village. With the mats and the cart, Sydor would make a shelter for his wife. If the night was fine they sat through the evening in the open. Long before its lips could shape a word the baby's eyes had been turned, untrammeled, towards the great heaven. The father and the mother, sitting by a small fire conversed in murmurs. On a thin sheet of coarse linen, spread over the scanty grass of the roadside, lay the child — open-eyed and quiet. Peasants' children seldom cry. They seem to be born with a

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prescience of the inutility of lament. With a child's fearless stare Stephen's eyes exchanged placid and profound glances with the inscrutable stars. Ignorant and undismayed he stretched his unsteady little hands towards the universe in a desire to play with that brilliant dust which streams through infinite space into an infinity of time. The glory of heaven is very near a child's soul, as the memory of his land is near the heart of an exile at the beginning of his pilgrimage. Afterwards the withering wisdom of the earth destroys the dreamy memories and longings in the awakening of a peal of laughter or a sigh of pain.

Stephen, unwinking, looked on — smiled at Immensity. In the day-time, from his mother's arms, he scrutinized with inarticulate comprehension the vast expanse of the limitless and fertile black-lands nursing life in their undulating bosom under the warm caress of sunshine. In the shallow folds of the plain dammed streams overflowed into an unruffled glimmer of small lakes, placid, as though soothed by the whispering tenderness of encircling reeds. On their banks dark willows and slim, unsteady birches stirred in the gentle and powerful breath of the indolent steppe. Here and there a clump of low oaks looked sombre and stolid, planted firmly above the dark patch of its own shade. On the slope hung a village, scattered white huts, with high, ragged, thatched roofs under which small unequal windows twinkled, like small eyes of a band of deformed and humorous dwarfs winking under high caps cavalierly aslant. Amongst them the green cupola of a village church, held up on high against the sky the gleam of a gilt cross. The cart would run down the declivity, dash through a troop of dogs barking about the wheels, rumble with loose traces over the dam — and go on slowly, with patient straining of the shaggy horses to climb the rise on the other side. As it laboriously topped the ridge the wide plains would open out again with the overpowering suddenness of a revelation. The uniform level of ripe wheat stretched out into unbounded distances, immensely great, filled by the hum of invisible life of the infinitely little: one unbroken murmuring field, as big as a world, spread out under the unclouded silence of the sky. Far off on the line of horizon, another village showed above the monotony of yellow corn, the green path of its few trees, and lay lone, minute and brilliant, like an emerald negligently dropped on the sands of a limitless and deserted shore.

II

The fabulous vastness of the country repeated itself day after day with the persistence of eternal truth — sank into the child's unconsciousness, coloured his childish thoughts, his young feelings, carried persuasion into his ignorance — irresistible like an unceasing whisper of a voice from Heaven. The father's prosperity grew apace — quicker than the child. There are such fortunate hazards! They ceased to wander and the boy lived with his Ukrainian mother in riverside towns while the father travelled about, busy with his wheat transport contracts, watching, highbooted in the mire of banks, his blunt-nosed scows afloat on the muddy streams of interminable waterways. In the desolation of the antechambers of government offices he found a new ambition for his son. He saw him uniformed, embroidered, bemedalled, autocratic, called Excellency. Everything is possible in Russia; and, as the proverb says: anything may be done — only cautiously! When the boy was eight years old he put him to school in a provincial town. From there Stephen went to the capital. The elder man could not understand the ambition of the youth. . . . Paint! Why paint? Paint what? Where? What's the good of it? Generals don't paint; nor do Councillors — even the writers in chancelleries don't paint. As to the General-Governors they would not even speak to a painter; they would not hear him if he presumed to. . . . The old man was afraid of such an incomprehensible form of madness. The son took his stand on the autocracy of vocation and argued his point in strange words, with bewildering arguments. The father saw only the fixedness of resolve and — in his fear of losing the favourite for ever — pleaded timidly. . . . All the painters of which his son spoke

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— he understood — were dead. Well! Poor folk. God rest their souls. What's the good then of going abroad if there was no one there to tell the secrets of the trade. They had left works? Maybe, maybe. He felt certain Stephen could paint much better than those dead fellows. Then, why go so far to look at what they left — if there was anything left to look at? He doubted it. Such a long time — long time. Things get rotten and crumble — houses and bridges — let alone paintings. And they were foreigners too! Why go so far — amongst Germans and such like? Was Russia not big enough to paint in — if he must! . . . He bowed his head at last. Heaven willed it. For his sins! For his sins! . . . "And do you write to us — we are old people," he said to his son. Then added with a tremulous sense of his own cunning, "Write to us. You will be here and there — God knows! Write so that we know where to send money after you. Those foreigners are great cheats and you are young — young. Well, it's time. Then, go with God . . . and come back soon". They embraced. The son drove off, the big collar of his cloak up, without turning his head once. In the house the mother had thrown her print skirt over her head and wept in the profound darkness of her grief. The father stood at the gate and threw a rapid sign of the cross after the vanished longings of his simple heart.

For years, under the gilded domes of splendid cathedrals, in the imposing gloom of holy monasteries, or in humble village churches the bereaved father sought in vain the help of renowned saints who answered his trustful prayers by the meaningless stare of naïve art. Evidently he did not deserve the mercy of the blessed. This thought dawned upon him at last, and he ceased to make himself obtrusive by his prayers but still haunted assiduously the sacred edifices in an indistinct but tenacious hope that the sight of his mute distress would, in time, move some attendant at the footstool of the Most High to a compassionate intercession. With both elbows on the little wooden table of "Traktirs" frequented by men of his class he often told his friends, while they sipped their tea, the story of his great sorrow — ending it solemnly with the words: "Our son is under the visitation of God", and with a deep sigh. He cursed the impious Frenchmen who had, by their black arts, bewitched the boy. After consulting his wife he made a solemn vow to build a church in which the misguided son could have his peace with God by painting, on a gold background, a gorgeous altar-piece. Let him only return! The money was ready! But Providence, unlike the powers of this earth, was impervious to the offer of a splendid bribe. He did not see his son again. Reaching home, after one of his business journeys, he was seized by some violent internal disorder. He had just time in the last return of consciousness to assure his distracted wife of his belief that the Jews had poisoned all the wells in the province — and expired in her arms with the resignation of indifference. She followed him quickly. During the last months of her life she seemed to have forgotten her eldest boy in an impatient longing to rejoin the man who had charmed her youth.

Stephen grieved, and carried his grief, contained and profound, through every second of the first few weeks. In the sifted light coming with pearly purity through the white clouds of lofty skylights he wandered with slow steps in the long galleries between the masterpieces of line and colour. The atmosphere of these places was full of the heartless serenity of perfection. The other people in them looked to him very small, distinct and — no matter how numerous — exceedingly lonely, like men and women lost in a strange world. Their irresolute footsteps rang, sharp but ineffectual, in the significant silence of glorious memories. Stephen wandered about. His powerful and clumsy frame clad in black attracted attention, eluded it by its restlessness. He flitted in the doorways, crossed the narrow end of long perspectives, was seen, thrown in abandoned postures, on circular couches, only to get up again and pace forward stiffly with fixed and unseeing eyes. The whispers of amused remarks did not disturb

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him — were not heard by him. The first appeal of death vivifies the past, evokes a great clearness of distinct memories out of the crash of destroyed hopes. Stephen remembered, could see, the pathetic faces of the dead who — he imagined — had died with his name on their lips. The armour of his art, the armour polished, impenetrable, unstained and harder than steel, seemed to be stripped off him by a mighty hand, to fall with an ominous clatter at his feet. Defenceless, he was pierced by the venomous sharpness of remorse. He had abandoned those two loving hearts for the promise of unattainable things, for alluring lies, for beautiful illusions. He wanted to shout at immortal achievements: "You have no heart". To his lofty aspirations he said: "You have no conscience", — To Beauty: "Thou art a lie!" To Inspiration: "Go! Depart with the last word unspoken — for I have no more sacrifices to offer". In the haste of his regrets he dispersed with frenzied renunciation the band of charming phantoms that had for so many years surrounded his life — and remained alone, humbled and appalled by the reality of his loss.

This state of agonizing self-reproach did not last long — no longer than with other men. Stephen's brother wrote him letters where filial sorrow was mingled with judicious concern about their affairs. That young man was cheery, practical and brotherly. He had taken over the business. He was also modern and irreverent. He spoke with strange levity of the Governor of the Province saying that the fellow had priest's eyes — that see everything — and a wolf's maw — that would swallow everything. "But" — he added — "I have the wherewithal to stuff his maw and have obtained the lease of government mills. We shall make a good thing of it. And next year I go to the Caucasus — provisioning the troops — when we shall dwell in a town, Brother, in a big town! You come and live with us. You shall paint those Tcherkesses and the Georgian women, and make money by it — if you like. There's a fellow here — went to Turkestan; painted those savages there on small bits of canvas, and even paper — and everybody in Petersburg is running to see. It's true! I have seen myself people fight at the doors. There's many mad folks in our country. Why shouldn't you get some of their roubles? But there is plenty of money already. Half of it is yours. I understand affairs. Come and live with us. My wife asks after you often and your nephew is beginning to run about. There's no country in the world like our country. Come!"

III

Stephen, letter in hand, looked across space and time at the land of his birth. From afar it loomed up immense, mysterious — and mute. He was afraid of it. He was afraid of the silent dawn of life, he who sought amongst the most perfect expressions of matured thought the word that would fling open the doors of beyond. Not there! Not there! . . . He wrote to his brother: "I cannot return. You would not understand if I tried to explain. But, believe me, to return now they are dead would be worse than suicide which is the unpardonable crime. I want to know . . . don't ask what — what some others knew and died without telling. Till I know I cannot come back. I think I dare to hope that when the word is spoken, I shall understand. Do not wonder at what I say. It is useless. You are right. There is no country like our country and no people like us — peasants. We are God's children. Little children yet. If we were like the men are around me now I could not speak to you as I am speaking. We are Brothers. We are different, but we love without understanding one another — and we trust. Do not be angry. If there is money tell me how much there is for me for I must arrange my life. I could also earn it — but then I would have to give up my hope. Many men had to do it. It wouldn't matter — but still I am anxious to know. Cherish our land — preserve in your heart the simplicity God's mercy has put there — think of me often".

The brother returned a puzzled but a resigned answer. Into business matters he went thoroughly with great clearness and Stephen found himself almost rich or, at any

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rate, in very comfortable circumstances. He had recovered somewhat from the terrible shock of his loss. The black violence of grief faded after a time into a cold greyness: the pale and unwilling dawn of another short day of uncertain respites. In that ashy light in which at that time he lived Stephen saw his phantom companions return, beckon, smile, point onwards with shadowy arms; and he heard the ghostly whisper of alluring words shaped by their beautiful and unreal lips. He must go! He had paid an enormous price for the privilege of a hopeless strife! Was it hopeless? . . . As he lay on a couch, with half-closed eyes, in the silence of his studio, the shadows of the evening closed round him. The day was attuning itself slowly to the sorrowful note of his heart. He got up, walked irresolutely about. The big room was under the roof which, over a part of it, came low down, with glazed openings that resembled slanting and luminous trap-doors. He walked there bending low and put his head out of the window by the simple process of standing up again. He saw the blurred waste of jumbled roofs and, further on, the rectilinear contours of a distant building shamming under a clouded sky the dignity of some Greek temple. Just beyond, the rounded masses of clumps of trees in the park with here and there a poplar shooting up like a spire, seemed to protest emotionally, with an indignant tremble of all their curves, against the rigid purity of that lie. Round his head, innumerable sparrows twittered aggressively, hopping amongst chimney-stacks. The world appeared ugly, colourless and filled with the impertinent, personal chatter of small impudences. He drew back abruptly as if to avoid a damaging contact. For a long time he meditated, sometimes striding slowly, at times standing motionless amongst canvasses where the advancing night had erased the vestiges of his persevering attempts to disclose his soul to himself and to others. He thought: It is dark now but tomorrow is another day. I have found no living teacher — and the dead will not speak. Why? . . . I have offered to them the awful sacrifice of two human hearts. Is it not enough? Am I unworthy? Who knows? And yet, and yet I feel. . . . "Very well," he muttered with a wave of his hand towards the sham temple where immortal masterpieces kept their secret, unmoved before the insincere ecstasies of the blind. "Very well. Be mute. Yours would have been, after all, but a human voice. I will go to the source from which you spring — to the origin of all Inspiration . . . ." After a while he murmured indistinctly: "Nature", as if he had been ashamed of using the profaned word — the word bedraggled on so many lips — to clothe the august form of the terrible, of the immense and tormenting Idea.

He left suddenly, without seeing anybody, without making even an attempt to shake the ever-ready hands of casual companions; whereby he caused his departure to be much discussed and the qualification of "a beastly plutocrat" added to every mention of his name, for about a week or so — in fact till he became utterly forgotten. He was not a man to leave a mark on the minds of his contemporaries; for he, strange monster, had not been provided with that touch of commonplace which makes us all brothers — and some of us illustrious. His work lay yet in the future, his lips were mute — and he pushed his aimless way through youthful crowds leaving no trail: unless a faint sense of hostility, awakened in some well ordered minds, may be put down to his account for a memorable distinction.

Again he travelled south. But this time he left the towns aside and looked at the uncovered face of the world. From the windows of commodious hotels he looked at the mountains and loathed them. They repelled him. They seemed to him senseless and wicked like magnificent monuments erected to the frenzied violences of some dark and terrible past. In the valleys he could not breathe and the sunrises seen from lofty summits he had climbed in his search disclosed to his sight only a disorderly mob of peaks whose shapes were as fantastic and aimless as a fevered dream. The Creator had tossed and jumbled that tormented bit of universe with an angry hand into a hopeless wilderness: forbidding and dumb.

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Stephen left the mountains and sought Nature in other aspects. And he saw her washed, brushed, fenced in, tricked out; artificially harmonious or artificially dishevelled, such as a super-civilized actress personating a gypsy, with the scent of manufactured perfumes lingering under the dainty and picturesque rags. Even in the most remote and wildest places where he set up his easel, the hand of man seemed to raise an unscalable wall between him and his Maker. He was discouraged. At last he turned his face to the west, towards the sea.

There, the opening of a wide horizon touched him as an opening of loving arms in a welcoming embrace touches a wayworn and discouraged traveller. For many succeeding days he dwelt on the shore drinking in the infinitely varied monotony of greatness. He was moved by the thought that there, at last, he stood on the threshold of the dwelling place of sublime ideas. He made his own the fleeting beauties of sunrises and sunsets with the avidity of a thief, with the determination of a buccaneer. He thought nobody could see in them what he saw and the snatching before the eyes of men of profound impressions had for him all the harsh joy of unlawful conquest. On hazy evenings after watching the last vestige of a rayless fire sink in the violet distances of the sea he would remain, listening anxiously, through gathering darkness, to the measured clamour of the surf. He believed that in that presence the word would come, the word desired, prayed for, invoked; the word that would give life, that would give shape, to the unborn longings of his heart. But the weeks passed wearing out the poignant delight of his hope. The great, the unreserved, the illimitable had a reserve and a limit for him; and after speaking for a while in tones of thunder fell into an austere and impenetrable silence. He waited patiently, humbly. At last with a sigh of: "Not here! Not here!" he turned his back upon the capricious sea.

He felt sad, cast down, unsecure; as a man betrayed by the most loved of friends would feel. He began to mistrust the whole creation — and naturally he thought of the undesirable security of perfect solitude. He dreamed of vast deserts, but — apart from the difficulty of living there — he had a fear of their deception. They also would speak in glorious promises only to cast him down at last from the pinnacle of his expectations. He would not expose himself again to a trial almost too heavy to be borne, to a disappointment that would, perhaps, forever rob him of the last vestiges of his faith. Cold silence, absolute silence, is better than the unfinished melodies of deceived hopes. He resolved to return to the cities, amongst men; not because of what the poet said about solitude in a crowd; but from an inward sense of his difference from the majority of mankind. He would withdraw into the repugnance he inspired to men and live there unembittered and pacific. He liked them well enough. Many of them he liked very much but he never felt the sense of his own quality (whatever it might be — he did not in any way think himself superior — only different) as when in contact with the latent hostility of his kind. He made up his mind to try Paris — and started at once.

IV

He had visited that town before, in the second year of his travels, and then had, for some months, camped in the land of Bohemia; in that strange holy land of art abandoned by its High Priests; in the land of true faith and sincere blasphemies; where, in the midst of strife for immortal truth, hollow idols sit in imbecile and hieratic poses looking with approving eyes and their tongues in their cheeks at the agitated crowds of neophytes bringing fuel to the undying blaze of the sacred fire. It is a land of dazzling clearness and of distorted shadows; a country loud with the brazen trumpetings of assertion, and eloquent with the whisper of honest hopes and high endeavours; — with the sighs of the, not less noble, failures; of not ignoble discouragements. Over it, the neophitic smoke of the sacred fire hangs thick; and the outer world looks with disapproval at the black and repulsive pall hiding the light, the faith, the sacrifices: sacrifices of youth, of burnt hearts, of many bright futures — of not a few convictions!

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Stephen would not cross again the frontier of Bohemia. Not having been able to find in achievement the justification of his nebulous desires, he thought himself in all innocence unworthy to associate intimately with those men of so much more distinct aspirations. He had no friends there; did not care to try for friendships; feared to recommence again the weary round of misunderstandings ending in distastes. If any came to him they would be welcome. Meantime he would remain outside and wait. Nobody came. For months he lived alone; working a little, trying to find form before he had mastered the idea, listening to inward voices. A life ineffectual, joyless and tranquil.

He had found on the outskirts of Passy an almost ideal retreat. It was a pavilion in the court of a modern house that brought its shabby façade into line with the sordid range of the street. The pavilion, a much older structure, probably a remnant of a much more dignified building, had a ground floor and only one floor above. On the ground floor there were three rooms in which Stephen lived. A broad stone staircase gave access above to a large room extending over the three under it. It looked like a ball room exiled from more splendid regions, and its windows, seven of them, overlooked a triangular vestige of some garden — once spacious — now only large enough to accommodate three or four trees, that lived there — as if in a dungeon — between the high blind walls of neighbouring houses. Their pale foliage waved below the windows of the pavilion in a shimmer of green tints that seemed pale and delicate with the pathetic frailness of town children. The sunshine lay on their branches, penetrated no lower, entered the studio as if guessing of the vision of light and colour that unrolled itself there in the head of the restless and solitary man. Below in the damp and uniform gloom the grass sprang up, vigorous and conquering, over that desolate remnant of beauty; covering the ground thickly with a prosperous, flourishing growth in a triumph of undistinguishably similar blades that pressed thick, low, full of life around the foot of soaring trunks of the trees; the grass unconquerable, content with the gloom, disputing sustenance with the roots, vanquishing the slender trees that strove courageously even there to keep their heads in the splendour of sunshine. In the branches a colony of blackbirds — probably unconventional — who had been expelled from the ordered communities of the gardens of La Muette led a disorderly, noisy, fluttering, whistling kind of life; flying constantly across the windows in and out of their grimy and disreputable nests; and wondering, perhaps with compassion, at the big stone cage where dwelt an immense and unfortunate creature that could not fly, or whistle, or sing.

On the courtyard side the big room had only two windows; big windows from ceiling to floor, having a wrought iron guard that rose in a complicated design of arabesque to the height of a man's elbow. The court itself was gravel, with stone walks, right and left along the wings of the main house. In the middle of it a circular clump of flowering bushes, once upon a time ornamental and kept under the control of a stone border, had run wild and luxuriated now in incult freedom. Through the high main building a wide archway, a carriage archway, led into the street. Trailing under the archway, over the court; rising as high as the windows of Stephen's studio, a strong perfume of oranges carried amongst brick walls and over sooty bushes a romantic suggestion of dark foliage and golden fruit, of tepid breezes and clear sunshine, of rustling groves in a southern land. Outside, the street rattled, murmured, shouted: inharmonious and busy. Inside, the sweet scented silence was almost undisturbed by the feeble tapping of Ortega's hammer. Now and then, about once a week, a heavy van would stop before the archway and boxes of oranges streamed into the court on the backs of men that ran in, bent nearly double, and dumped their loads down with a low groan. Then Ortega's voice piped all day, thinly voluble, agitated and important. At times it would be drowned by the harsh tones of strident scolding under the recess of the archway. The noise would burst violently, rasp the air with the cruel sharpness of its spite, end in scornful exclamations

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drawling crescendo: "They will ruin you under your nose! Look at that man, José. You see nothing! I will teach him! But look! Look! All these oranges. . . . Sanctissima. . . . Look! You! José!" Old Ortega unshaven and dirty tripped about on his meagre shanks here and there like a man in extreme distress. And when the scolding had abruptly ceased his thin squeaky voice would be heard modulated and persuasive with tender intonations: "But Dolores! . . . Don't . . . Don't Dolocita! . . . My dearest!"

V

Those Ortegas were the owners of the house, or rather the man owned the house which the woman ruled with a perpetually irritated masterfulness. They had established themselves there some years ago; and the blue sign-board over the ground floor windows, proclaiming that I. Ortega sold within oranges, olives and wine in a wholesale way, had become faded with the rains of many autumns before Stephen found rest in the interior pavilion after his long wanderings. The couple were well-to-do. José, one of the three children of prosperous Biscayan cultivators, had wandered away early, seeking martial distinction in the ranks of colonial troops. Returning, he found for himself in Seville a wife, and then after many changes had found also, what to him seemed, and indeed was, a fortune in commerce far from his native land. His brother, the genius of the family, had become a priest and now was in charge of a hamlet-full of fiery Basque souls which he endeavoured to keep in the path of godliness with fierce denunciations, with menacing words, with gloomy fanaticism, knowing nothing of the world; hating it, for it was the hospitable playground of the devil, hardly able to bring himself to tolerate the impious sunshine that, by an inexplicable oversight of the Creator, shone indiscriminately upon the believing and upon the wicked. A tall, lean priest with a narrow forehead and an ascetic yet coarse face; moving amongst hot-headed and fearless men, respected, admired and feared wherever he went, indefatigable and keen in his shabby, black, close-fitting cassock, amongst those reckless sinners; ready to leap, for the defeat of evil and error, out of his ominous and concentrated silence, like a sword from the scabbard in the hand of an unforgiving God. A mystical fanatic who in the darkness of black nights saw visions, who in the silence of barren hills heard voices; who living amongst simple men and women felt clearly that he was living in a world inhabited by damned souls. A man of great faith who battled for his belief in an obscure and arid valley of the Pyrenees, wearing out his unyielding heart with the rage, the humiliation, the bitterness of his inefficiency in that terrible contest against the victorious Destroyer of mankind.

The youngest of the three children, a girl, married a mountaineer possessor of a patch of ground and of a ruinous stone dwelling that stood in the unproductive disorder of a narrow valley bestrewn with grey boulders. The fellow, handsome, sinewy and brown-faced, went through life singing: a royalist, a smuggler and a gay companion, very popular amongst the men of the hills, who were ready any day to die for their King and their *fueros*. One evening he went away singing, carbine in hand, into the purple confusion of towering peaks — and never returned. Doubtless he died in good company. And even in these peaceful times the frontier-guards talk to this day of that sharp and bloody affair in the pass, where a wooden cross stretches its black arms in stiff indifference, over the common grave of the breakers and the guardians of the law.

The widow, always delicate, sickened seriously soon after. The priest brother came, confessed, absolved, buried her — and took the orphans: two girls.

The priest was poor — very poor. Poor with his own poverty and with all the indigence of his flock. That he was wealthy enough to endow both girls with the Everlasting Treasure, he never doubted. Yet he suffered to see them exposed to those privations which for himself he considered to be a reward too splendid for his merits. He corresponded irregularly with his brother

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José — with that righteous man, amassing wealth, away there in the magnificent and sinful city. He wrote him of his difficulties. He got an answer written by his sister-in-law. The virtuous Dolores said her husband had consulted her. Well, as to money, commerce had its exigencies and money was scarce. But they were childless. They would take one of the girls, care tenderly for her, and, eventually, marry her to a man of good repute — if Heaven so willed. José on his annual business tour to Murcia would on his return call on his brother and take the child. She, Dolores, would be a mother to a deserving and obedient girl. And the child would have many advantages. They knew many good people. . . . Father Ortega read on for four pages, with a thoughtful face, at last with a frown. He had doubts. On the other hand he trusted his brother. He believed in the wickedness of mankind with all the innocence of his soul. With equal innocence he believed in the virtue of Ortegas. In the appalling desert of human sinfulness the blood of his race flowed pure like a miraculous stream. José had been a soldier. What of that! There had been soldiers who also had been saints. José, if no saint, would be a good Christian. His own brother! Yes! One of the little ones must go. She also was an Ortega. His parentage was a safeguard for the child. He could not believe in the possibility of any of his kin falling away from grace. He would not even think of it. It would be too terrible.

The brothers met after many years. Away from his "Dolocita, my dearest!" José bore himself with a free joviality becoming a successful merchant who had not quite forgotten his warlike youth. They talked together of old times, of the dead, of the old people, of the sister they had loved much. Before the stern soldier of the Faith the ex-sergeant of colonial troops was like a child: affectionate and respectful — a little awed. Father Ortega asked about the King — the rightful King — who also lived in Paris. Had José seen him? Yes? Good! A better time was coming. With the rightful monarch the fear of God would reign in the land. The time would come! And Father Ortega grew animated, talked loud. The two little girls, standing close together, very quiet, listened open-eyed. As the time for separation approached the priest became tender, very solemn too. "Mind, José," he said impressively, "I deliver to your care a Christian soul. See that you do your duty. A sacred charge!" Poor José was touched and not a little discomposed. He repeated: "Good! Good! Of course! How else?" — and looked down at his imposing charge. He saw only a barelegged girl of about twelve with tumbled brown hair and large grey eyes that streamed with tears. The other one was crying too. He felt moved to tears himself. "Brother," he blubbered out, "I will take . . . take . . . both of them . . . Poor . . . things. Dolocita won't mind!" But the priest refused with an air both exalted and austere. Theresa must remain under his influence. That child had dispositions . . . a sacred spark that must be nursed into a flame. Later on if there was need for a little money to help her into a convent of her choice he would ask his brother. She was different from the younger, Rita. She had a vocation — a sacred spark. As he spoke his sunken eyes glimmered, like a pair of votive candles before a rude altar, in the gloom of a wayside shrine.

The sisters parted in the dust of a narrow road that winds along the bottom of the shallow and rocky valley. The brothers clasped each other in a long embrace, then the younger gave his blessing to the elder man, who stood with bared head before the uplifted hand. José and Rita had to walk some little distance to the village where José's conveyance awaited him. Father Ortega holding Theresa by the hand turned his back upon the setting sun and stood looking at them as they went on, diminishing in the distance, under the escarpment of the stony cliffs. The priest's shadow fell slender and long on the white dust of the path as if darting after the departing figures; and the shorter shadow of the child, pressing to his side, mingled with it for a part of its length. The two made as though only one distorted and blank image of a giant hound, pointing with a fantastically elongated finger at the

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young wanderer going into the unknown. The priest stood silent, the child sobbed gently by his side; and they remained gazing till José and Rita disappeared on a turn of the path behind a big detached bush, crowned aslant, with a solitary pine waving on its summit: a round, grey boulder that lay on the brown flatness of the sward like an enormous and aged head under a sombre and plumed *béret*.

VI

José loved the child. The girl was affectionate in an independent kind of way and the old man wanted some unchecked outlet for the kindness of his heart. She reminded him also of his sister, who in having left his home early he remembered best as just such another girl. To Dolores her husband's niece was interesting principally as a costly memorial of an unheard-of concession to conjugal weakness: a concession that must be repaid to her by years of meek obedience. She was a strange product of ignorance and shopkeeping instincts. She was the daughter of a man looked upon in his native town as imbued with western ideas, a man very clever and audacious. In fact the only really enterprising ship-chandler of poetical Seville. She could read, even in French, with assurance — she could write with, not an altogether fatal, hesitation — she could cast up sums, in addition, in her husband's books with the ease of natural aptitude revelling in a charming occupation. She was prejudiced, unforgiving and knew how best to assert her personality against José. The gentle combatant of the glorious Philippine wars, accustomed to discipline of a sort, was not a very rebellious subject. Still there were points on which he dared to have his will — sometimes, even, his way. But with the arrival of Rita even the shadow of imperfect freedom departed from him. The astute Dolores soon noticed the strength of his affection for the child, and from that time Rita's comfort, education, her needs, her welfare became in Dolores's hand so many irresistible instruments serving to grind José into very small dust. To the consideration of the child's happiness he gave up his tastes, his opinions, his comforts — even his habits; all — but one! Abnegation has limits. To save Rita from unjust scoldings, from unnecessary slappings, from being shut up cruelly in a dark room or unnecessarily deprived of her supper he would give up his plans of business, his yearly journeys (those green oases of his life), would consent to have his opinion on wine or olives impugned, sneered at, overruled; but he would not give up his evening visits to a café where his countrymen used to congregate. Dolores with the prudence of an accomplished tyrant gave way on that point: for a man must not be robbed of every incentive to endure the burden of existence if he is to remain a fit subject for autocratic rule.

Every evening in the festive glare of gaslights, amongst the polish of tall mirrors, the gleam of gildings, the cheerfulness of white marble tables intensified by the glowing, rich note of colour in the crimson plush of the seats, José luxuriated at his ease, enjoying his short-lived liberty, his fleeting sense of self-respect, in the midst of men who would listen, without unkind remarks, to what he had to say. He was an extreme, a ferocious Legitimist, ready, theoretically, to pay the price of war, famine and conflagration for the triumph of his ideas. The sonorous periods of his speech rang with the words extolling "our mother the Holy Church" and the "*Rey neto*" in strange rhapsodies; while the aproned waiters circulated in the smoke and murmur of the café, clattering with the saucers, beer-glasses and coffee cups which they distributed smartly upon crowded tables with an air of bored disdain. José was happy every evening — and all day (more fortunate in that than most men) he had the certitude of that happiness to help him through his trials. It may be said without exaggeration that he lived only for the joy of these moments and — more unselfishly — to watch over Rita.

It is hard to say what the wild girl of Basque mountains, transplanted into the heavy-scented but sordid atmosphere of the house in Passy, would have become had it not been that José found a good friend for the child in one of his café acquaintances of

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the same political way of thinking with himself. Señor Malagon was socially superior to the seller of oranges being a considerable leather merchant from Cordova. His circle of acquaintance was extensive, for his wife was French and they moved in a very respectable, well-to-do and proper world of solvent business men possessing sociable wives. Mrs. Malagon, a vivacious and sentimental person, was immensely interested in Rita's story as told her by her husband. Poor José wearied all his friends with the eulogies of his niece. Malagon, a grave man with a cameo profile and a bluish chin, listened patiently, raising, from time to time, towards his lips, a beringed hand holding a cigar. José confided to him his difficulties in hints, in half-admissions of his wife's impracticability. He spoke, discreet, longing for advice, mindful of his out-of-doors dignity but ready to sacrifice even that for the good of his niece. Señor Malagon — imperturbable — heard, pondered for a long time: impenetrably sympathetic, cautiously dumb. But the little Mrs. Malagon would not admit any caution. They must befriend the girl. The daughter of a smuggler killed in the exercise of his functions? How wicked and romantic! And an orphan? How sad! Brought up by a solitary priest in a lonely valley? It made her shiver, but in that case there could be nothing wrong there. "We must help your friend about her, Henry," she said. "He is not my friend," protested Henry; "he's just a right-thinking and respectable Spaniard with whom I played dominoes every evening for the last year or two. That's all." "And the girl is pretty?" asked the wife. The husband admitted she was. Strange but pretty. He had called on Ortega and saw her there. "Business, you know, my dear," he explained. "Could one speak to that horrid Mrs. Ortega? Could one really venture to go and see her?" wondered Mrs. Malagon. "H'm! She is very . . . proper. Common but . . . respectable," admitted Henry, with deliberate heaviness of diction. He did not want to commit himself to anything very precise. Personally he had no objection. It did not seem very necessary. Those people were by no means poor. Not at all. Well off, rather. Still, if his wife liked. . . . Malagon, married late in life, spoiled his wife — paternally.

In this way, after many preliminary manoeuvres of cunning diplomacy on the part of José, it came to pass that Mrs. Malagon's serviceable, one-horse landau was seen at last, waiting before the wide archway of the Passy house. It cannot be said that Dolores was very gracious. She could no more smile graciously than a cockatoo; a bird she resembled somewhat, when viewed from one side, by the irritated curve of her nose and by the invarying cold fury of her round and pitiless eye. But she was decently polite and made no vehement objection to Mrs. Malagon's desires. She only remarked afterwards that the little Frenchwoman was a fool — to which opinion the unprincipled José hastened to assent. Of course she would not part altogether with the child. Indeed it was not demanded of her. She had no objection however to be relieved now and then from the bother of looking after the girl. "Unruly minx! Well, if your sister was like that I am glad I never knew her." José, pretending not to hear, would slink out, to swear and stamp with rage in some secluded place. From sheer affection for Rita he was reduced to a pass where he dared not protest against any abuse, any insult, any blasphemy. He was afraid of what his wife might do. She was capable of going to these people, of abusing them foully, of taking away the child, of making an awful disturbance. She would break the windows perhaps! *Quién sabe?*

VII

Rita, tamed under the heavy hand of Dolores, was softened by the peaceful influences of a commonplace and happy home. The ordered life, the decencies of a civilized household of pretty surroundings — for Mrs. Malagon piqued herself on being cultivated and artistic — seemed to make round her a sort of tender half-light in which the child moved happy, joyous, herself the brightest spot in the haziness of a mediocre daylight, where life appeared a quiet and an easy achievement. Adéle Malagon — only a

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year younger than Rita — had for her companion that kind of fierce friendship of which only very young girls seem capable. They were very much together, almost continuously, being at first educated together by Miss Malagon's governess. Only now and then Dolores's capricious fiat — when José had to be punished for some want of pliability — would call the girl back into the atmosphere of scolding and garlic of her aunt's home; where, for a few days, or even a couple of weeks, she lived — painfully on the alert; combative and unrestful; prepared for strife, like a warrior in the presence of an enemy. Then her uncle was childishly happy and ludicrously miserable. He admired her bravery in holding out — with more or less success — against Dolores, he enjoyed her caressing ways — that were for him only — and he deplored the state of affairs that hardened the character of the girl. In the other household Adéle moped, the governess — good soul — complained dolefully, "That child will forget everything! When she gets back from that awful house she is positively wicked for a time. I can't manage her". Mrs. Malagon staring hard with those unseeing, swimming eyes of hers would murmur serenely, "Oh! It will be all right". At the family luncheon the corpulent Henry would miss the girl and remark in his profound murmur, "Ho! The little savage gone again!" And when she returned he greeted her with "Ho! You have come back? *Bueno!*" Then he complained with ponderous playfulness about his Adéle learning "that barbarous jargon of those Biscayans from our wild mountaineer" and distributed impartially wholesome bonbons to both children. After dinner, before going to his café, he would sit in his wife's salon wheezing comfortably and beam in amused silence upon his wife, his Adéle and that waif of the mountains as if all three were his promising daughters. In the café José kept his seat, would jump up to meet him, would shake both his hands at parting. He liked the unassuming old fellow whose opinions were so very sound. Very sound! From time to time — very seldom — old Ortega, freshly shaved, scrupulously got up in black — as if he were going to a funeral — would call on Mrs. Malagon and, after anxious inquiries if there were no visitors, would be introduced by a pert *bonne* into the splendour of Mrs. Malagon's knicknacks. Rita's benefactress — as he called her — received him always with sweet patience which he did not abuse. His calls were short. To him she appeared a princess, a queen, nay, more, almost supernatural: a benevolent fairy that had saved Rita from vague but immense misfortunes. He stammered, always embarrassed, his heart full, "You are an Angel. An old man thanks you — with his heart, all his heart!" When Mrs. Malagon said that it really was a small matter, she was pleased to do anything for Rita — who was charming; "We all love her", José would exclaim in a trembling voice: "Isn't she! Who wouldn't love her? But Heaven has sent you for my comfort. I kiss your hands and feet". And he always did kiss the little woman's hands devoutly before going out of that magnificent drawing room. Mrs. Malagon — when the door had closed after the simple old fellow — would hold up close to her short-sighted eyes the plump white hand and look for a time with a faint smile at a tear José often left there, before she would dry it with quick, gentle taps of her cambric handkerchief, while she thought, "Am I really so very good? How extremely touching!"

The peaceful conventions of middle life, the conventions resembling virtues, made for Rita as if a shelter behind a respectable curtain that separated her from the real existence of passions. The pretty assumptions of selfish quietude gave to events an aspect of general benevolence, a polished surface of easy curves hiding the resounding emptiness of thoughts, the deadly fear of sincerity, the cherished unreality of emotions. It went on as a tale made up of charming but meaningless sentences, flowing with gentle ease through a succession of serene days. In the shallow stream Rita was carried away from year to year; listened to the soothing imbecility of its babble. Listening, she was willing to forget the impressions of young days, the rugged landscapes, the rugged men, the strong beliefs,

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the strong passions. To her all this was hardly a matter of experience. It was more like the memory of an atmosphere, the memory of some subtle quality of air made up of freshness of perfumes, of brilliance, of stimulating gusts, of gentle breezes — things intangible, indescribable, not understood; impossible to define and impossible to forget. She thought of them with love, with longing — sometimes with repulsion, often with scorn — now and then with rare lucidity that suggested fear, that swift fear of the unavoidable approaching in dreams. She would shake it off with the smile of unbelief — with the callous innocence that ignores the trammels of its origin. She was so adaptive that her adaptiveness had the aspect of a cruel absence of the heart. She appeared gracious and heartless living in aimless periods of sunshine, living between sunrises and sunsets as if there had been, suspended over her head, no menace of another day.

Only from time to time during her repeated visits to Passy she caught a glimpse of sincere emotions. José's increasing love for herself, the love inarticulate and profound; that unchecked flow of tender impulse relieving the ignorant and oppressed heart was the first thing that struck her as unquestionable and imposing in its absolute openness, in its convincing unreserve. Its helplessness was touching and it seemed to her to be an indissoluble part of it, filling her with regret at the thought that so much affection must be bound up together with so much weakness. Was it always so? Was it always the most sincere that were the weakest? For her uncle as she grew up, she had a caressing, a deep gratitude — in which, almost unknown to her, lurked a faint flavour of disenchanted pity. The vagaries of Dolores she met with a rigidity of demeanor which caused that worthy woman to foam at the mouth in the imperfect privacy of a big glass cage where she sat from morning to night with her yellow profile of a bilious parrot hovering over the pages of account books. The angry miserliness of Dolores grew with age, rising by its vastness, its stupidity, by the blind ruthlessness of its strength to the dignity of an elemental force of nature. And the increasing griminess of the home where the plaster peeled in slabs between the grey sashes of dusty windows, the leprous aspect of its façade, remarkable even in the unhealthy blotchiness of the soiled street, hid the cold emptiness of big rooms: four stories of vast and dirty desolation through which, shaking his head dolefully, José shuffled with slippered feet in futile rounds of mournful and useless inspection.

* * *

TIGER, TIGER

Being a Commentary on Conrad's "The Sisters"

By Ford Madox Ford

I FELT as if a beast from the jungle had suddenly leaped at me when first the editor of this periodical, and then the executors of the late Mr. John Quinn asked me to finish a story by Joseph Conrad — a story called "The Sisters". For "The Sisters", along with a story published in "Tales of Unrest" and called "The Return" occupied a curious position in Conrad's psychology — or at least in his psychological view of his own work. He seemed to regard them as something slightly obscene at which one could only peep in secret. They shared the quality of things kept in a locked drawer. I notice that in some notes he made for Mr. George Keating in a specially inscribed copy of "Tales of Unrest" Conrad writes:

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"'The Return' was begun immediately 'The Nigger of the Narcissus' was finished. A thorough change. It shares with one other story of mine the distinction of never having been serialized. No editor would accept it — and I don't wonder at their unanimity. One was good enough to write: 'Very fine. But I can do nothing with it.' Some cultured Scandinavians liked it in translation. Nothing would induce me to look at it again."

This must have been written in 1924 and it astonishes me to find that, even so late in life, Conrad retained his feeling of aversion from this story which, personally, I always liked. For "The Return" and "The Sisters" are indications of the gradually weakening desire that Conrad had to be what I would call a "straight" writer, as opposed to the relatively exotic novelist of the sea and the lagoons which fate, the public and some of his friends forced him to become. It will be observed that "The Return" is placed in London as the other story is in Paris — a Paris rendered in so few words and so livingly that, upon my soul, reading of it here in New York I feel as homesick as can be for the Seine. It will be observed also that "The Return" deals with the relation of the sexes; so "The Sisters" was to have done. That no doubt was why the cultured Scandinavians — and I myself — liked the one story and why certain of his friends persuaded him to abandon the other.

It is with regret that I feel myself forced to refuse to finish this. There is nothing I should find more stimulating than the attempt — for it would be an attempt to throw myself back into an early frame of mind and to have a shot at a technical *tour de force* that would intensely engross me. It is as if Mr. Rascoe and the executors of Mr. Quinn had dared me to hold my finger in the flame of a lighted candle. But, although I would quite cheerfully accept that dare or even try to draw the bow of Achilles, literary politics of the moment forbid the contemplation and indeed, at present, I have other things to do. But think of the outcry that it would cause to arise amongst the aligned autograph collectors and old junk dealers who surrounded poor Conrad in his later years! It almost tempts me.

Conrad, then, at one time wished to be what I have called a straight writer, treating of usual human activities in cities and countrysides normal to the users of Anglo-Saxon or Latin speech. He desired in short to be a Dostoievsky who should also be a conscious artist writing in English or preferably in French. Think of what gorgeous visions that opens up.

I notice that the Polish minister to the Court of St. James stated the other day that in an interview he had with Conrad, Conrad asserted that he chose to write in English because that was the only language in which to write about the sea. But the point is that for quite a long period Conrad was intensely depressed at the thought that he would be forced forever to write about the sea.

At the time when I first knew him, which was just after the appearance of "The Return", he regarded writing about the sea as an avocation only for boys' writers and he regarded the writing about normal terrestrial humanity as the only glorious occupation for a proper man. That is to say, in common with myself, he regarded the writing of novels as the only occupation for a proper man and he thought that those novels should normally concern themselves with the life of great cities. Fate only permitted him to write two great novels dealing with city life — "The Secret Agent" and "Under Western Eyes". But although "The Secret Agent" was relatively a failure, "Under Western Eyes" with its rendering of political intrigue and really aching passion has always seemed to me by a long way Conrad's finest achievement. Here — again I say it seems to me — you have Conrad appearing in the rôle of a Dostoievsky who is also an artist, and if I were asked to name the book by which I was sure — and hoped — that Conrad would go down to posterity this is the book that I should name.

But at the time of which I am speaking — in the middle '90's — Conrad still faced unshaped destinies. And the voice of reason proved too strong for the promptings of artistic ambition. Henley, who had just published "The Nigger of the Narcissus" in *The New Review*, impressed upon Conrad

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that his only chance of making a living lay in writing about the sea. Henley was the British Tory Imperialist and it was the sea as viewed from British bottoms about which he desired to read.

Mr. Edward Garnett, who at that time was — as I am sure I hope he still is — the literary dictator of London, also used very strong pressure upon Conrad not to write in the spirit of "The Return". That may be seen in the lately published letters from Conrad to Mr. Garnett — the letters written just before he was about to set out on his honeymoon and to write upon a French island the other stories which make up "Tales of Unrest". Conrad used to be of the opinion that the pressure exerted by Mr. Garnett was in a sociological, rather than in a marine, direction. Mr. Garnett, he said, disliked all empires and all colonies and all colonizers, and what he desired to see written was rather stories like "Heart of Darkness" or "The Outpost of Progress" or the Malay tales which rendered the veniality, lust and brutalizing influences which white men exercise over oppressed native populations, than any projections of modern normal city life.

That at least was Conrad's view of Mr. Garnett's exhortations, although it would appear from the letters that Mr. Garnett's pressure, like Henley's, was rather in a marine direction. Be that as it may and sensible as the advice was to a man without any means and with a young wife and baby, Conrad viewed the prospect of becoming a sea writer with an extreme dejection.

With an extreme dejection! He considered the fate of Captain Marryat, whom he always regarded as one of the very greatest of English novelists, and he saw himself relegated like the author of "Midshipman Easy" to the tattered schoolbook shelves of eternity. His agony at this thought was at that time very great and indeed, even as late as 1923, he wrote to a gentleman who had written to him a distasteful puff of his collected edition: "That infernal tale of ships and that obsession of my sea life . . . after all I may be a seaman, but I am a writer of prose". And of all the agonies of the poor fellow's agonized career this, if not the greatest, was the most consistent and enduring.

He bowed his head to his friends and the inevitable. Readers might be found for books about the sea; it was unthinkable that they would support Slav introspections passing in Paris. So, as I have said, the manuscript and the very thought of "The Sisters" was, as it were, put away in a locked drawer. He bowed his head and faced a destiny as harsh and bitter as the sea itself. He had to provide a future for his beloved Borys and that to him was a duty as sacred as that of any priest.

Nevertheless, from time to time, as if guiltily, as if swiftly contemplating the obscene, he would take a peek into that locked drawer and for a minute the Tiger would raise its burning head. In those years my intimacy with Conrad was very great. Day after day, month after month and year after year we sat till far into the night, sometimes right through the night, devising of literature. Sometimes of the hearts of men but always returning to how to render what passes in the hearts of men! So I may claim to know the mind of Conrad of that day better than any other man. And he had that inhibition — that thwarted desire to write of the relationship between men and women. That he denied to himself as any church-warden and father of a family might have denied it to himself and for the same reason.

I remember his saying with extreme contempt that Stevenson in one of his letters declared he would never write about women because he would lose his market. And then suddenly he, as it were, drooped and added, "But after all am I any better?" And what he, curiously, desired to write of was incest.

I don't mean to say that he proposed to write of the consummation of forbidden desires, but he did want to render the emotions of a shared passion that by its nature must be most hopeless of all. At the end of his life when he felt his position secure he began upon this task. He was accustomed to say that it had always been his ambition to write a novel of Napoleonic frigate warfare, but far, far more it was his ambition to

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write of the passion between a couple who were, unknowingly, brother and sister. That, in "Suspense", he was going to risk. It would have contained precious little of the frigate warfare which he got off his chest in writing that very serenely beautiful book "The Rover".

Incest as a subject seems somehow predestined for treatment by Conrad. In Poland he had been brought into contact with a number of tragic romantic instances of unconscious unions that were within the limits of the Canon Law. And curiously enough "The Inheritors", the first of our collaborations to be published, has a faint and fantastic suggestion of — unrequited — love between brother and sister. It was as much as anything, because of this, that Conrad fiercely — almost fanatically — insisted on collaborating in this book and interrupting the course of "Romance" upon which we had already been laboring for several years. "The Sisters" was an early try at the other thing. The pensive Slav painter was to have married the older sister and then to have had an incestuous child by the other. I do not profess to know every detail of the plot of this story as it would finally have stood. Conrad mentioned it perhaps half a dozen times in the course of ten years.

And of course in his shadowy and rather hurried projections of this forbidden story Conrad varied the narrative very often and I do not remember now all the variations. What comes to me as a sort of composite photograph is this: Stephen was to have met, fallen in love with and married the elder sister. Then the younger sister, failing in the religious vocation that her uncle the priest desired her to have, was to come to Paris and to stay with the young couple in Stephen's pavilion, the tyrannous character of her aunt being such that she could not live with the orange merchant and his wife. The elder sister proving almost equally domineering, Stephen was to fall before the gentler charm of the younger. And the story was to end with the slaying of both the resulting child and the mother by the fanatic priest.

That I think would have been the final form of the story, but of course there were many variations upon this backbone. I think the emotion was to have been screwed up by a visit to Paris of Stephen's brother who, equally, was to have fallen in love with the younger sister thus creating a rivalry between the two brothers, and I know that at one time Conrad meditated transporting the characters both to Spain and to Russia so as to get the last drop of contrast out of contrasted race natures.

The difficulty was the figure of the priest. I don't know whether Conrad began the story before he had read *Une Vie* or the other story of Maupassant's in which a fanatical priest murdered the guilty couple. I rather think that must have been the case. Or he may have begun the story with the idea that he could sufficiently differentiate his priest from Maupassant's. Or he may even have thought of treating the priest out of rivalry to him as the author of *La Maison Tellier*. I know we both frequently talked vaingloriously and only half in earnest of treating one or other of Maupassant's projects and indeed, I did eventually have a shot at it.

But that abbé was the real snag — the question of how to treat him similarly and yet differently proved too difficult and I daresay that reluctance to face the problem was what really made him put the manuscript away once again. So we have "Chance" instead of "The Sisters". For myself I regret the substitution. The vista that opens to me of the works of an immensely great international writer, another but more impassioned Turgenev, another Flaubert but more of a poet, has a gloomy glory that I cannot but regret. Contact with Anglo-Saxondom has, alas, a belittling effect on the artist, we so love trivialities and so avoid the contemplation of great causes. But the majority of my readers will not agree with me and so I may as well drop the subject.

I had hoped to have sufficient room to write a little on the subject of Conrad's style at the time when "The Sisters" was written, but I haven't, so I must drop that too. Perhaps the Editor will permit me to return to it one of these days.

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The Trance

By Edwin Muir

Lulled by La Belle Dame sans Merci he lies
  In the bare wood below the blackening hill.
The plough drives nearer now, the shadow flies
  Past him across the plain, but he lies still.

Long since the rust its gardens here has planned,
  Flowering his armor like an autumn field.
From his sharp breastplate to his iron hand
  A spider's web is stretched, a phantom shield.

When stray feet shake the ground close by his ear
  Armies pass through his dream in endless line,
And one by one his ancient friends appear;
  They pass all day, but he can make no sign.

When a bird cries within the silent grove
  The long lost voice fleets by; he makes to rise
And follow it; but his limbs do not move,
  And on the ground unstirred his shadow lies.

But if a tiny leaf should drift
  Across his face and lie, the dread drops start
Chill on his forehead. Now he tries to lift
  The insulting weight that stays and breaks his heart.

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A TELEPHONE CALL

By Dorothy Parker

PLEASE, God, let him telephone me now. Dear God, let him call me now. I won't ask anything else of You, truly I won't. It isn't very much to ask. It would be so little to You, God, such a little, little thing. Only let him telephone now. Please, God. Please, please, please.

If I didn't think about it, maybe the telephone might ring. Sometimes it does that. If I could think of something else. If I could think of something else. Maybe if I counted five hundred by fives, it might ring by that time. I'll count slowly. I won't cheat. And if it rings when I get to three hundred, I won't stop; I won't answer it until I get to five hundred. Five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty, thirty-five, forty, forty-five, fifty. . . . Oh, please ring. *Please.*

This is the last time I'll look at the clock. I will not look at it again. It's ten minutes past seven. He said he would telephone at five o'clock. "I'll call you at five, darling." I think that's where he said "darling". I'm almost sure he said it there. I know he called me "darling" twice, and the other time was when he said good-bye. "Good-bye, darling." He was busy, and he can't say much in the office, but he called me "darling" twice. He couldn't have minded my calling him up. I know you shouldn't keep telephoning them — I know they don't like that. When you do that, they know you are thinking about them and wanting them, and that makes them hate you. But I hadn't talked to him in three days — not in three days. And all I did was ask him how he was; it was just the way anybody might have called him up. He couldn't have minded that. He couldn't have thought I was bothering him. "No, of course you're not," he said. And he said he'd telephone me. He didn't have to say that. I didn't ask him to, truly I didn't. I'm sure I didn't. I don't think he would say he'd telephone me, and then just never do it. Please don't let him do that, God. Please don't.

"I'll call you at five, darling." "Good-bye, darling." He was busy, and he was in a hurry, and there were people around him, but he called me "darling" twice. That's mine, that's mine. I have that, even if I never see him again. Oh, but that's so little. That isn't enough. Nothing's enough, if I never see him again. Please let me see him again, God. Please, I want him so much. I want him so much. I'll be good, God. I will try to be better, I will, if You will let me see him again. If You will let him telephone me. Oh, let him telephone me now.

Ah, don't let my prayer seem too little to You, God. You sit up there, so white and old, with all the angels about You and the stars slipping by. And I come to You with a prayer about a telephone call. Ah, don't laugh, God. You see, You don't know how it feels. You're so safe, there on Your throne, with the blue swirling under You. Nothing can touch You; no one can twist Your heart in his hands. This is suffering, God, this is bad, bad suffering. Won't You help me? For Your Son's sake, help me. You said You would do whatever was asked of You in His name. Oh, God, in the name of Thine only beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, let him telephone me now.

I must stop this. I mustn't be this way. Look. Suppose a young man says he'll call a girl up, and then something happens, and he doesn't. That isn't so terrible, is it? Why, it's going on all over the world, right this minute. Oh, what do I care what's going on all over the world? Why can't that telephone ring? Why can't it, why can't it? Couldn't you ring? Ah, please, couldn't you? You damned, ugly, shiny thing. It would hurt you to ring, wouldn't it? Oh, that would hurt you. Damn you, I'll pull your filthy roots out of the wall, I'll smash your smug black face in little bits. Damn you to hell.

No, no, no. I must stop. I must think about something else. This is what I'll do.

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I'll put the clock in the other room. Then I can't look at it. If I do have to look at it, then I'll have to walk into the bedroom, and that will be something to do. Maybe, before I look at it again, he will call me. I'll be so sweet to him, if he calls me. If he says he can't see me to-night, I'll say, "Why, that's all right, dear. Why, of course it's all right". I'll be the way I was when I first met him. Then maybe he'll like me again. I was always sweet, at first. Oh, it's so easy to be sweet to people before you love them.

I think he must still like me a little. He couldn't have called me "darling" twice to-day, if he didn't still like me a little. It isn't all gone, if he still likes me a little; even if it's only a little, little bit. You see, God, if You would just let him telephone me, I wouldn't have to ask You anything more. I would be sweet to him, I would be gay, I would be just the way I used to be, and then he would love me again. And then I would never have to ask You for anything more. Don't You see, God? So won't You please let him telephone me? Won't You please, please, please?

Are You punishing me, God, because I've been bad? Are You angry with me because I did that? Oh, but, God, there are so many bad people — You could not be hard only to me. And it wasn't very bad; it couldn't have been bad. We didn't hurt anybody, God. Things are only bad when they hurt people. We didn't hurt one single soul; You know that. You know it wasn't bad, don't You, God? So won't You let him telephone me now?

If he doesn't telephone me, I'll know God is angry with me. I'll count five hundred by fives, and if he hasn't called me then, I will know God isn't going to help me, ever again. That will be the sign. Five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty, thirty-five, forty, forty-five, fifty, fifty-five. . . . It was bad. I knew it was bad. All right, God, send me to hell. You think You're frightening me with Your hell, don't You? You think Your hell is worse than mine.

I mustn't. I mustn't do this. Suppose he's a little late calling me up — that's nothing to get hysterical about. Maybe he isn't going to call — maybe he's coming straight up here without telephoning. He'll be cross if he sees I have been crying. They don't like you to cry. He doesn't cry. I wish to God I could make him cry. I wish I could make him cry and tread the floor and feel his heart heavy and big and festering in him. I wish I could hurt him like hell.

He doesn't wish that about me. I don't think he even knows how he makes me feel. I wish he could know, without my telling him. They don't like you to tell them they've made you cry. They don't like you to tell them you're unhappy because of them. If you do, they think you're possessive and exacting. And then they hate you. They hate you whenever you say anything you really think. You always have to keep playing little games. Oh, I thought we didn't have to; I thought this was so big I could say whatever I meant. I guess you can't, ever. I guess there isn't ever anything big enough for that. Oh, if he would just telephone, I wouldn't tell him I had been sad about him. They hate sad people. I would be so sweet and so gay, he couldn't help but like me. If he would only telephone. If he would only telephone.

Maybe that's what he is doing. Maybe he is coming up here without calling me up. Maybe he's on his way now. Something might have happened to him. No, nothing could ever happen to him. I can't picture anything happening to him. I never picture him run over. I never see him lying still and long and dead. I wish he were dead. That's a terrible wish. That's a lovely wish. If he were dead, he would be mine. If he were dead, I would never think of now and the last few weeks. I would remember only the lovely times. It would be all beautiful. I wish he were dead. I wish he were dead, dead, dead.

This is silly. It's silly to go wishing people were dead just because they don't call you up the very minute they said they would. Maybe the clock's fast; I don't know whether it's right. Maybe he's hardly late at all. Anything could have made him a little late. Maybe he had to stay at his office. Maybe he went home, to call me up from there, and somebody came in. He doesn't like to telephone me in front of people. Maybe he's

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worried, just a little, little bit, about keeping me waiting. He might even hope that I would call him up. I could do that. I could telephone him.

I mustn't. I mustn't, I mustn't. Oh, God, please don't let me telephone him. Please keep me from doing that. I know, God, just as well as You do, that if he were worried about me, he'd telephone no matter where he was or how many people there were around him. Please make me know that, God. I don't ask You to make it easy for me — You can't do that, for all that You could make a world. Only let me know it, God. Don't let me go on hoping. Don't let me say comforting things to myself. Please don't let me hope, dear God. Please don't.

I won't telephone him. I'll never telephone him again as long as I live. He'll rot in hell, before I'll call him up. You don't have to give me strength, God; I have it myself. If he wanted me, he could get me. He knows where I am. He knows I'm waiting here. He's so sure of me, so sure. I wonder why they hate you, as soon as they are sure of you. I should think it would be so sweet to be sure.

It would be so easy to telephone him. Then I'd know. Maybe it wouldn't be a foolish thing to do. Maybe he wouldn't mind. Maybe he'd like it. Maybe he has been trying to get me. Sometimes people try and try to get you on the telephone, and they say the number doesn't answer. I'm not just saying that to help myself; that really happens. You know that really happens, God. Oh, God, keep me away from that telephone. Keep me away. Let me still have just a little bit of pride. I think I'm going to need it, God. I think it will be all I'll have.

Oh, what does pride matter, when I can't stand it if I don't talk to him? Pride like that is such a silly, shabby little thing. The real pride, the big pride, is in having no pride. I'm not saying that just because I want to call him. I am not. That's true, I know that's true. I will be big. I will be beyond little prides.

Please, God, keep me from telephoning him. Please, God.

I don't see what pride has to do with it. This is such a little thing, for me to be bringing in pride, for me to be making such a fuss about. I may have misunderstood him. Maybe he said for me to call him up, at five. "Call me at five, darling." He could have said that, perfectly well. It's so possible that I didn't hear him right. "Call me at five, darling." I'm almost sure that's what he said. God, don't let me talk this way to myself. Make me know, please make me know.

I'll think about something else. I'll just sit quietly. If I could sit still. If I could sit still. Maybe I could read. Oh, all the books are about people who love each other, truly and sweetly. What do they want to write about that for? Don't they know it isn't true? Don't they know it's a lie, it's a God damned lie? What do they have to tell about that for, when they know how it hurts? Damn them, damn them, damn them.

I won't. I'll be quiet. This is nothing to get excited about. Look. Suppose he were some one I didn't know very well. Suppose he were another girl. Then I'd just telephone and say "Well, for goodness' sake, what happened to you?" That's what I'd do, and I'd never even think about it. Why can't I be casual and natural, just because I love him? I can be. Honestly, I can be. I'll call him up, and be so easy and pleasant. You see if I won't, God. Oh, don't let me call him. Don't, don't, don't.

God, aren't You really going to let him call me? Are You sure, God? Couldn't You please relent? Couldn't You? I don't even ask You to let him telephone me now, God; only let him do it in a little while. I'll count five hundred by fives. I'll do it so slowly and so fairly. If he hasn't telephoned then, I'll call him. I will. Oh, please, dear God, dear kind God, my blessed Father in Heaven, let him call before then. Please, God. Please.

Five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty, thirty-five. . . .

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THE SKULL OF SWIFT

By Shane Leslie

IN the year of Grace 1835 some graceless ghouls excavated a pair of skulls in the Cathedral Church of Saint Patrick the Apostle of Ireland within the Metropolitan City of Dublin. One skull was that of a woman, frail tabernacle of the frail, in which the late Sir William Wilde, an Irish physician and antiquary of repute, discerned "perfect model of symmetry and beauty" and added that "the teeth were perhaps the most perfect ever witnessed in a skull". The inscribed stone testified the mortal name of Mrs. Hester Johnson, but gave no clue whether she was really wife, widow or maid. But among the immortals she appeared to bear another name, as it were in Homer, who attributed characters with both earthly and divine names. Mrs. Johnson to men, to the gods she was apparently known as Stella.

In close proximity lay the skull of an old man, which Sir William Wilde diagnosed as resembling "in a most extraordinary manner those skulls of the so-called Celtic aborigines of Northwestern Europe". According to effigy and epitaph it pertained to a Dean of the Cathedral, who there had eventually sought rest for bone and oblivion for heart. The passing stranger might read further and feel surprised that a Minister of the Sanctuary and a Professor of Christian retirement and benevolence should leave arresting and racking words upon a tomb: —

"UBI SÆVA INDIGNATIO ULTERIUS COR LACERARE NEQUIT."

Why this savage indignation and what lacerations? Surely from ordained and established priests of settled conviction and settled income this was a hard saying and a disturbing word to carve in black marble. Surely the lives of Christian Deans, protected from the cares which afflict poor curates, and the responsibilities which depress Bishops, should be the glorified impersonation of peace and good will upon earth. But this was a Dean, who sought beyond the grave a place where the savagery of his indignation should no longer lacerate his heart. This was a Dean, who was no gentle shepherd even to his sheep; and, dividing humanity into wolves and sheep, it would have been difficult to say whether the cords of his tongue fell fiercest on flock or foe. This was a Dean, who finding no rest himself, was unwilling to allow rest to others. This was a Dean, who was fretted by the ungodly. This was one, who left no record for theology when he lived, and who emptied no episcopal throne when he died. This was the writer whom mortals called Jonathan Swift but whom the gods, should he have traveled into their far country, must call Lemuel Gulliver, for, though his bones were fashioned after the manner of mortal bones, his mind befitted the godlike, full of anger and power, and raining fury upon the righteous and unrighteous alike, fiercely pitiful and condescendingly faithful unto those whom he loved, but loving them as the gods love, and bringing those who loved him to their death. His was a mind not without vain ambitions, which he allowed to destroy themselves, nor without desires, which he compelled to die within. A mind not without many affections and affectations, but a mind which pierced and broke the glass of illusions and tore the imagery and rent the clothing which swathed the minds of those about him. A thwarted, frenzied and disappointed mind, which might have disappeared into the void like a bitter fume, had it not been tempered with the rare gift of irony. Men that are mortal and born of women write and utter themselves in satire. The gods are ironical in silence. This Dean had brought the irony of the gods with him to earth and used it to the dread and diversion of his fellow-men. Before he died, the irony had entered his soul also, and he asked only

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to suffer no further laceration by the acts of unwise men or by his own wounding thoughts.

The skull of Dean Swift was brought to the phrenologists, who were camped at that time in the middle ground between science and fashion. This phrenological art enabled them to decipher "amativeness large and wit small" between the sutures of his dead brain. With this sapient finding let phrenology at least rest content. The "Prince Posterity", to whom the Dean offered the most remarkable of his works, might be amused or puzzled by the attribution of "amativeness large and wit small" to a Dean whose flashing wit was only small in comparison to the thunder-clouds of wrath from which it was derived; and whose amativeness was only the dancing shadow of passions as terrible as his hate. "Amativeness" is insufficient to describe that passion by which the gods destroy those whom they cause to love themselves. Otherwise the post-mortem exposition of this skull was unrevealing. The great gifts had passed with the ghost. The phrenologists were condemned to conduct the autopsy of the hen which laid the golden eggs. "Amativeness large and wit small"! — and with that verdict both skulls were returned to sepulchral peace.

The Life of Dean Jonathan Swift will never be written. Many biographies have been attempted, and the best begun, that of John Forster, was never completed. What Lord Orrery flashed in envious caricature, Dr. Delany brought within the pious framework of a Chapter-House portrait. Between them they contributed the chiaroscuro, the thunderstorm and the sunshine of the Swiftian landscape. They were contemporary, however much they disagreed, and contemporary also was the derided Mrs. Lætitia Pilkington, dubbed "adventuress", lying gossip or notorious liar. Her memoirs embalm a partial but faithful reflection of the Dean's declining grandeur. The "adventuress" realized at least the privilege of adventuring into his orbit. What the eighteenth century essayed the nineteenth could not perfect. The grumbling denigration of Dr. Johnson was only over-painted in blacker pitch by Macaulay and Thackeray.

The contemporary record could only have been corrected by Swift himself, but beyond a fragment of autobiography and some personal poems he wrote no past of himself nor did he envisage biography by an alien pen in the future. What he had written to "Prince Posterity", he had written. As a result certain passages in his life remain contradictory, while others have passed into insoluble problemage. We know that Shakespeare was married. We do not know and never shall whether Swift married Stella or not. On other somewhat leading questions there has been disagreement among the Swiftians. We know that Shakespeare was not an Irishman. Whether Swift was one or not, the controversy has been loud. We know that Shakespeare was divinely sane. We are left in doubt whether Swift was really mad in his final phase, or whether he was an ecclesiastical Hamlet all his life. It is curious that we know more about Shakespeare than about Swift on such points. We can judge Shakespeare's religion as that of a Renaissance Agnostic drifting between congenital Catholicism into nominal Protestantism. Shakespeare was anti-Roman but not anti-Catholic. Swift was so violently anti-Catholic that he could be claimed by the anti-Christian. Whenever his mind lurched outside orthodoxy, it was not content with any gentle disbelief. It passed straight into the annihilating scorn of his poem on "The Day of Judgment", meet gift for Chesterfield to send long after the Dean's death to Voltaire. In this poem the Dean took upon himself to address both sheep and goats as their Eternal Judge. 'Twixt Dean and God Swift felt sometimes indistinct. To the orthodox he stated distinctly enough:

> "You who, through frailty stepp'd aside;
> And you, who never fell — from pride:
> You who in different sects were shamm'd,
> And come to see each other damn'd;
> (So some folk told you, but they knew
> No more of Jove's designs than you)."

In other words the righteous, whose conceit kept them righteous are due to be dis-

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appointed at the *Dies Irae*, for the Great God only pronounces them *sold;*

"The world's mad business now is o'er,
And I resent these pranks no more.
I to such blockheads set my wit!
I damn such fools! Go, go, you're bit."

He did not believe men were damned in another world but still less that they could be reformed in this. Sceptics are as welcome to such lines as the orthodox to his apologetics, if religious apologia can be gleaned from his sly cantankerous attacks on infidels. By allegory and by satire he made the best case possible for the Church of England, in which he proved a model functionary and punctilious monger of rites, but he left a considerable and natural doubt whether he believed in worlds hereafter or in any Deity save the Aristophanic Jove of his own verses. Mysticism, enthusiasm and Catholicism he tossed sky-high, for he would accept nothing except what lay before him. The State Church was a visible reality as well as his chosen profession. He was too meticulous to be mystic. He counted seconds and half-pence. He counted his friends and a servant's faults and the mathematical correctness of "Gulliver's Travels". He oozed realism more than religion. Yet he was so far from being a hypocrite that St. John Bolingbroke, who as a free thinker was an impartial judge, called the Dean "a hypocrite reversed". It is simpler to deal with his ecclesiastical career on the supposition that Swift had no soul. Most creatures being too low to be possessed thereof, it is possible in the infinite vagaries and combinations of minds, bodies and souls that some human beings may be sufficiently exalted above good and evil to need or possess no soul. It explains much of Swift's inconsistencies and conundrums. It will be the only hypothesis we will venture to propose, although the problem whether Swift had a soul or not abuts on more insoluble matter.

We know that Swift left a mortal skull. It is difficult to believe that an immortal soul ever quitted that inverted bowl of bone. The presumption that Swift with all his gifts possessed no soul resolves an enigma, which might prove as difficult to the Divinity on Judgment Day as it was to fellow divines and mortal critics during his lifetime. His immortality is of this world and is based upon prose writings, some of which give the illusion of being written outside planetary conditions. Of all his poetry not one line was drawn from the higher heights. No poetry was so soulless. If poetry and religion to any extent coalesce, Swift was to that extent unpossessed of either. Lord Jeffrey, who found evil in Swift's better side, found some "glow of poetical animation" among lines which included the couplet about

"infants dropped, the spurious pledges
of gypsies littering under hedges."

His writings, prose or verse, were streaked with the earth earthy, and the further problem of Swift's coarseness is best faced in the survey of a book, from which any cited example is deleted. All that need be said is that he often wrote more coarsely than even his age. There are passages in the "Tale of the Tub", which shocked Queen Anne, lost him his Bishopric and proved that if a writer was too impure to be a Bishop in England, he might become resplendent as a Dean in Ireland. There are passages in the unexpurgated "Travels of Gulliver", which would make a sea-captain guffaw. And there are poems on:

"The Lady's Dressing Room"
"Strephon and Chloe" or
"A Beautiful Young Nymph going to bed" —

which though hastily labeled by editors a disgrace to the English language remain too strong in their sickening unsickenedness, to be called immoral or licentious. Utterly lacking in beauty or decency, they indulge only that part of the Dean's complex which became obsessed by loathing of the female form divine. Relentlessly he described the details of the nymphal or matrimonial chamber. This type of poem was the key to his moral character and unlocks the hidden room, in which the dead bodies of Varina and Stella and Vanessa swing mournfully in the sight of posterity.

Whatever Swift's mental or physical composition, it is equally loose-spoken and unproved to describe him as depraved of mind

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or impotent in his body. Whatever were his experiences as a young man, it is not proved that his mind or his body were diseased. In a letter offering to baptize the daughter of Archdeacon Walls he referred to himself as an honest gentleman without the archidiaconal "faculty of increasing the Queen's subjects". Was this the reason that he delivered himself on every occasion of a howling hatred and most venomous vomit at any mention of the means whereby the benevolent Creator has designed the continuance of the human race? That the human race had better burn than marry or even come to a total end rather than fornicate was the form taken by his Pauline complex. Meanwhile his poems were as little provocative of romance or encouraging of matrimony as St. Paul's Epistles. If his object was to sicken youth of the charms of beauty, analyzed or caught unawares, he succeeded abundantly in showing that—

"To him, that looks behind the scene,
Statira's but some pocky quean."

Better he thought the most humiliating scenes his pen could describe

"Than from experience find too late
Your goddess grown a filthy mate."

To read these poems cannot be immoral, for they will cause the rudest and most desirous lover to shrink within the confines of modesty abashed. To make the contrast without straying outside the poetical flights of Deans, compare the Dean of St. Patrick's poem to a nymph going bedward, with the celebrated and beautiful verses which Dr. Donne, the Dean of St. Paul's, inscribed to his mistress undressing. The latter was an addition to the literature of the Cytherean goddess. The former only preserved some pungent anti-aphrodisiacs in rhyme. Of his prose vulgarities, inelegancies or indecencies, whatever they may be termed, Swift's judicious critic will distinguish passages from the kingdoms of Lilliput and Brobdingnag, which only intensify the author's moral, with passages from his "Directions to Servants", which appear to be as pointless as dirt itself. Of the Oriental setting to love, of the romantic, of the charming Swift had no conception. To erotics he frankly preferred emetics, because he thought them more salutary. The run of virile indecency is constant in his writing until it dwindles away in the pseudo-cipher letters to Dr. Sheridan at his last stage. That he was not unconscious of criticism appears in the subtle apology he attributed to Gulliver, who like Swift himself "thought it necessary to justify my character in point of cleanliness to the world, which I am told some of my maligners have been pleased to call in question". Well — it has been called in question and accounts for much that is unpalatable in Swift to-day, for which explanation is easier than apology.

Swift, who was described as the "hypocrite reversed", was also the lover or gallant reversed. An introspective hatred of women permeates his whole work from such acid etching in the "Journal to Stella" as that of a great lady, whom he visited after her confinement; "pale, dead, old and yellow for want of her paint. She has turned my stomach but she will soon be painted and a beauty again", to his picture of the ladies of Brobdingnag, who "were very far from being a tempting sight or from giving me any other emotions than those of horror and disgust", and moreover "made me reflect upon the fair skins of our English ladies, who appear so beautiful to us only because they are of our own size". Obviously the grossest conduct in canaries is lovely compared to the lightest amours of elephants.

He stands then as a moralist, equaled only in the anti-feminist passages of the Sixth Satire of Juvenal. In private life he demanded a strict respect for his cloth and postulated against "those odious topics of immodesty and indecencies with which the rudeness of our northern genius is so apt to fall". The filth of "Strephon and Chloe" tails into wholesome matrimonial advice —

"On sense and wit your passion found,
By decency cemented round;"

Spices from his "Letter to a Young Lady Marrying" might still be profitably distributed among the hymeneal-elect. "You have but very few years to be young and handsome in the eyes of the world and as few months to be so in the eyes of a husband," could be slipped into every bride's trousseau.

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Prudence not passion he made the base of marriage. Only the cultivated mind will hold a man, "who soon grows weary of acting the lover". Amorous fondness in company exhibits hypocrisy or what the Dean thought unmentionable. The wives, who clutter most over handsome husbands, would pay most for the news they had broken their necks. Wives should make men not women their friends, for "I never yet knew a tolerable woman to be fond of her own sex". But women he placed a little above the monkey, "who has more diverting tricks than any of you!" So far then the not irreconcilable contradictions of Swift on the score of decency or indecency. Swift was not afraid to call a spade a spade and even a *Spado* a *Spado*, but his poetry showed him overfond of calling spades as his perpetual suit. He remains the mightiest moralist in printed English, although a mocking and malignant one. But in the private affairs of the heart, in his combined relations with Varina, Vanessa and Stella his problem remains insoluble. Those charming ladies have certainly pained, puzzled, pleased and divided the minds of his biographers.

Litesa scripta manet. Enough remains in poem and letter to embarrass a husband of Stella in a divorce court — or a lover of Vanessa in a breach of promise suit.

Vanessa was burned to the slow fires of his distant touch. Stella *intacta* perished in a union that was consumingly inconsummate.

No jury is competent to return a verdict on that mind or even assure posterity whether Swift was properly mad or not. Doubtless he was legally mad and the literary tradition embalms his lunacy, but time's post-mortem leaves the question open. Water upon the brain and labyrinthine vertigo approximate cerebral malady. Although Swift followed Cyrano de Bergerac on his journey to the moon, yet he was never a lunatic. But even on details there is blank contradiction. Faulkner, his Dublin printer, said he died "in great agony with strong convulsive fits". Lord Orrery said without a pang. His plaster cast seemed to Scott "maniacal" but to Wilde "remarkably placid". But whether he was married or unmarried, or the coarsest or most delicate of mortals, or an innocent sceptic or a most dangerous Christian remains paradox. Hazlitt pointed out that he was the most sensible of poets and one of the most nonsensical. In a famous phrase Lord Bathurst told Swift he had "set kingdoms in a flame" by his pen but Lechy described him as "the pacificator of Europe". Further whether he was Irish or English, or loved or hated Ireland most in his life, we have not ventured to decide. But whether he had a heart? Oh yes — a soul? — Nay.

Of soul and heart, two distinct but often confounded functions, one was entirely lacking while of the other exquisite evidences were buried in the lumber of Swift's remains. The limbo, which awaits the soulless, was his on earth. The tortures of his mind were not the sufferings of the serene martyr. His short times of happiness were gleaned from the hurricane. He could not enjoy peace and he could only rest in storms. The peace of old age and achievement brought not beatitude but fatuity. The peace of contemplation was impossible to a spirit which was worn rather than rusted out. There was no soul to take the place and set the poise of his mind at the last. His entire writings show no aspiration, no sentence even, marking a soul's flight. All that produces the idealist, the credulous, the poetical, the enthusiast and fanatical in man was lacking. When he wrote his Utopia, mankind turned away with a shudder of horror or a laughing shriek. Severely practical and avaricious of this world's ways and means, he achieved what was economically and professionally the best possible for him. But the *beau geste*, the chivalrous gesture, the bright and shining example was as unknown to Swift as the power of taking a Pindaric flight above or a Dantaean voyage below. His flame was a burning hate. His weapons were assiduous criticism, revolted wrath, and acid satire. Scorn, contempt and pride shafted his pen. His muse ascended from the pit. Apollyon the destroyer was his master and not Apollo.

Perverseness warped his nature; but his

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fate and circumstance were equally perverse. He was fated to be the curse of those who loved him, the champion of a Church whose Bishops he hated, the idol of a country he detested and whose people he despised. To Swift providence in any personal sense must have seemed a queer kind of providence. Professionally he became a cleric, because neither he nor Heaven seemed able to prevent it. Perhaps the Divine sense of humor permitted it. But he was preferably the devil's advocate than the priest of God. Once only he reversed his rôle and with unwitting pen canonized "one of the Saints of English literature". But the downward character of his writing, if not aslant like that of the Lilliputians, tended in a sense other than in Gulliver's to be "from up to down like the Chinese not from down to up like the Cascagians". His writings invite no confidence in the Divinity. Certainly they destroy all in humanity. He was appalled by what he found in created man and he made himself appalling to man and appalling (who shall deny it?) to his own Creator. Much that he wrote seems too terrible to be true, but it was often too true to be terrible. Terror comes from the unknown and undreamed. When Swift went furthest in the dreams of his imagination, he wrote the truest truth. Truth breeds not terror but horror, and no English writer has achieved the horrible more successfully than Swift. That he had religious standards without soul left him only prejudices, and he was religious in the sense that no one was more sincerely prejudiced against the prejudices of others. Reasoning powers without soul reduced him to logic's logomachy and flung him finally into the pit of pessimism.

Swift has been compared to Prometheus chained by jealous gods and devoured of a vulture in mountains trackless to men, because he brought them fire from Heaven in a reed. If irony was the perquisite of the gods, Swift surely brought it to men in his inky quill, but he was condemned to torturing chains and to laceration by that very vulture, which was his own genius. The life of Swift must be of the nature of filming the vulture. Without the regality of soul proper to the eagle, the vulture plays his earthly part scenting the carrion and swooping upon the carcass at our feet, but we do not look to him for direction heavenward. Swift's flight was always set steadily downward and downward he carries all who care for him. Swift had no wiser or gentler friend in modern times than Sir Norman Moore but Sir Norman could only say that Swift "had arrived at a conclusion, unaffected, horrible but to him irresistible, to hate mankind not out of mere inhumanity but as a result of long observation, a conclusion that made him wretched till he reached the place *ubi saeva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare unequit*". It is this wretchedness, intrinsic rather than acquired which makes it charity as well as criticism to relieve Swift of possession of a soul then or after.

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SINGING NIGHTINGALES AND CHATTERING APES

A Cautious Peep at Aristophanes and the Comic Opera of an Earlier Democracy

By Richard Atwater

THE great musician steps to the platform, bows to the prolonged applause of thirty thousand auditors, turns to face a symphony orchestra of four hundred players, taps with his baton, and in a mighty ecstasy a legion of nightingales soars to heaven. It is the final movement of the Unfinished Symphony, to be completed now for the first time in the climax of its intoxicated sweetness. At the thirty-fourth bar of moonlit glory and divine passion, the conductor drops to his hands and feet and, monkey fashion, canters over to the bass viol, to pull from its mysterious womb six spitting tomcats, a pound of linked sausages, and an American flag. . . .

The great midwestern critic, conservative and right thinker, on his first visit to the east calls at the palatial home of H. L. Mencken politely to remonstrate against the latter's profane attitude toward life and letters. The genial host brings from his cellar a large, cold, and pleasantly cobwebbed brown bottle, kept, he swears, for just this happy occasion; it is indeed unfortunate, he apologizes, that he himself is temporarily on a diet of citron water. Glass follows glass as the two adversaries exchange exquisite banter and amiable insults. Never, declares the great midwestern conservative, has he passed a more gorgeously satisfying evening. As he swallows his last drink from the drained bottle, he absent-mindedly glances at the label. It is "Glover's Mange Cure". . . .

On a splendid stage the rose velvet curtain rises to disclose a Maxfield Parrish scene blending Old England with Fairyland. Faint bugles echo, as the most beautiful girl you ever saw rides dreamily up the mystic street on a white charger. It is Lady Godiva, her dainty figure clad only in the golden hair of girlhood and a soft smile of chaste innocence. Slowly, silently, her naked purity rides down the magic lane and away while still fainter bugles echo. Twelve kettledrums explode. Up the street on a synthetic and splay-footed plush horse gallops the counterfeit of a notable Republican statesman, his equally chaste but disconcertingly virile purity topped by the neat, but for present purposes, inadequate whiskers which identify his dignified countenance from one ocean to another. As he, too, smiles modestly upon the choking audience, the front and rear halves of his unruly steed come apart, and slipping frantically through the gap, the great statesman's innocence is grievously spanked by the resounding floor. . . .

* * *

These parables, to be found with difficulty in the original Greek, may give a faint idea of what Heine meant by the "*Weltvernichtungsidee*" of Aristophanes; in each of whose comedies the sympathetic Hun discovered "an ironical magic tree with singing nightingales and climbing, chattering apes".

The studious Germans, it would seem, have somehow found it easier than is possible for the busy American to climb again the tree of apes and nightingales: one must learn Greek, as Americans will not, to clamber beyond the lowest branch of the Old Comedy. And even Schlegel mourned that one half of Aristophanes is lost, even to the Grecian scholar. The modern who thinks to read the first and greatest comic opera in a translation must, alas, agree with the English scholar Hickie, who reflected sadly on the version by the German Voss, "It is so absolutely literal as often to be more difficult than the Greek itself". The freer paraphrases are as inadequate.

Why is this, when Plato, Demosthenes, Xenophon, Thucydides, Lysias and other masters of Hellenic prose are so readily read-

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able in a modern tongue; when even the poets from Homer to the Greek Anthology are, with a few exceptions such as Pindar, so admirable still in English, even if much of their music is lost in our less liquid syllables?

To explain the difficulty is simpler than to resolve it.

The frolics of the Old Comedy were not only produced before an audience of pagans, and men only at that, but pagan men assembled for the purpose of celebrating the god of Wine, who happened also to be the god of the Theater. The Dionysia was a Go-To-The-Theater-And-Get-Drunk Week, where piety was progressive. First came the sober tragic trilogy; then the more genial "satyr play"; and finally, as the climax of pious intoxication, the comedy, a Hallowe'en revel of untrammeled burlesque. Written for such heartily appreciative hearers, it is no wonder that at least half of Aristophanes is too "obscene" to be put into English, that most puritan of languages, for the cold perusal of a Christian family. Grant, if you like, with John Addington Symonds that the healthy candor of Aristophanes is never prurient, in bad taste, or vulgar, and that its honest dirt is, under the philosophical microscope, more sanitary than the subtly leering germs in the urbaner smut of Swift, Molière, Pope, Ben Jonson, Sterne or Voltaire: it is still so disconcertingly and brutally frank that the average American (to whom the idea that Adam and Eve were once naked and unashamed would be shocking, could he dare to imagine their condition) would be too excited by the unaccustomed "wickedness" of the text to appreciate its elemental humor.

And what in these distant ancestors of the "Follies" and "Vanities" of today has not, with the changing of moral fashion, become thus improper, is nearly all as elusive for another reason. Aristophanes's burlesques, when not directed at the physical frailties to which human flesh is still, I am told, subject, but which are nowadays not blurted out so indelicately in public, were aimed at topical ideas and contemporary individuals. Thanks to the studies of classical scholars, this satire and parody of fifth century Athens is, indeed, intelligible: nearly every obscure allusion can be explained in a lengthy footnote. But the success of such humor lies in its freshness; a joke that must be diagrammed is no longer funny. There must be one sudden happy explosion within the auditor as two familiar ideas have novel intercourse in his mind in a quick and extravagant coincidence.

Now to recreate the original freshness of such satire, all allusions, proper names, slang phrases, etc., could theoretically be paraphrased by parallels in contemporary life. By a tremendous *tour de force*, a single Aristophanic play could thus be Americanized in three determined months — by which time the first scene of it would again be out of date.

What actually happens is that a delighted Greek professor, once in every lifetime, discovers a phrase of the Greek corresponding neatly to the American slang he has somewhere overheard: "Twenty-three, Skidoo!" And his Aristophanes class for the next thirty years is thus nicely made to appreciate the modernity of the classics while it wonders just what the novel argot of the Professor may once have signified.

Our librettist would, we may be sure, have guffawed merrily if he could have anticipated a later generation of barbarians thus seriously poring over his careless fugitive quips. Thus, should a gentleman of Patagonia, three thousands years hence, come across F. P. A.'s column and the line "Massachusetts, Thayer she stands for", one may imagine his similar perplexity to produce a snicker, after he has looked up Massachusetts in the classical atlas, the explanation of the Sacco-Vanzetti trial in note 3458, vol. LXXVII of his Ancient History, and has then been advised by his Teacher of Forgotten Literature of the source of the line so cutely parodied by the amusing old writer in the difficult dead language. . . .

What, then, remains of the lost laughter of the fifth century Before Censorship, that a citizen of this later democracy may still apprehend without a blush or a struggle, in the perhaps unlikely event that he has enough curiosity to raise his eyes? Let us see if we can shake a still edible chestnut down from the tree of nightingales and apes.

* * *

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In the "Lysistrata" the women of Athens, weary of the constant wars in which their men are busied, decide on a love strike; and, after some difficulty in restraining the weaker sisters from breaking the strike, the ladies lure their husbands into promising anything, including peace, so that the eager gentlemen can resume what Prof. Robert Benchley has called a normal sex life. Let us blush and turn hastily to the next comedy. In the "Thesmaphoriazusae" the poet Euripides, condemned by the women for the misogyny expressed in his realistic dramas, dresses up his father-in-law in female clothes, so that he can join the ladies in their religious orgies and plead for the poet. The women, however, become suspicious of the aged Julian Eltinge and violently strip him to determine his sex, though he cries in expostulation that he is the mother of nine. This is also good, clean fun, but again I can find no printable specimens of the lusty dialogue. In the "Parliament of Women" the ladies raid the assembly while the men folks are asleep, and decree a new constitution which is a communism of property and sex. (This was a satire on Plato's ideal Republic, as if that made it any better). Old and ugly are to have equal rights in love with the young and beautiful. There is one especially nice farce scene in which a comely young man, panting for a certain pretty party, is seized by two aged beldames who fight concupiscently over his protesting body. Post office regulations once more forbid exact quotations, though I assure you there is nothing suggestive in the lines, which leave nothing to the imagination.

Shall we try the political satires? In the "Acharnians", so named because the chorus consists of Old Charcoal Burners, an Athenian, weary of war (there seems to have been an awful lot of war in those days) makes a private peace between himself and the various enemies of his city-state. Much fun is had when emissaries from Persia, Megara, and Boeotia come to visit him talking their outlandish dialects. It is too bad that at least one year of Indo-European Philology is required to get the point of these early variants of the stage Dutchman, Irishman and Hebrew. The comedy closes with the peaceful Athenian enjoying all the pleasures of a private Armistice Night while his envious neighbors have to go to war, and what a night it was, too (and don't ask us about that, either). Then there is the "Peace", where another battle-weary gentleman mounts a dung-beetle on which he flies to heaven in search of the title rôle. The dung-beetle . . . all right, I'm sorry I mentioned it. Anyway, a playwright whose jokes about the fair sex are all dirty could hardly be expected to describe war in a clean way. Let's try the social satires.

The "Knights", or "Gentlemen", is a criticism of democracy. Cleon, a tanner, was the Big Bill of his time; so Aristophanes invents the most ignorant democrat he can think of to run against Cleon for the office of demagogue. As this opposition candidate he picks a Sausage Seller. You can imagine what a sensation this made, with Cleon sitting in the audience, too. But each political joke requires a page of footnotes, so again we pass on. The "Wasps" is a burlesque of the prevalent passion for litigation. A famous case of the time is parodied by a scene in which two dogs appear as plaintiff and defendant. There are grandiloquent oratorical speeches of the opposing lawyers for the barking litigants; witnesses for the defendant dog's character; and the defense wins the jury over by bringing in the accused's litter of puppies to whimper for mercy for their dear old dad. This, I think, is still good, and I omit illustration only because the humor is in the whole idea rather than in the actual lines.

The "Fragments" of various lost plays do not concern us, nor does the "Plutus", which should have been lost, being, to be honest, pretty dull stuff; so we are now confronted with the three greatest extravaganzas of the master: the "Frogs", the "Birds", and the "Clouds".

In the "Frogs" the god Dionysus, and none too respectfully described, either, goes to Hades to attend a contest between the old-fashioned tragedy writer Aeschylus and the newfangled, rationalizing dramatist Euripides as to which shall be the favorite poet of the dead.

"My poetry didn't die with me: this fellow's did, which gives him the advantage

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down here," complains Aeschylus. The trial, however, begins.

"I never introduced a woman in love into my plays," boasts the older poet.

"Maybe you didn't know how to," suggests the flippant Euripides, and points out that a realist must be familiar with such matters. His women, he notes, were true to life.

"I dare say," sneers the romantic tragedian, "but that is no reason why you should put them on the stage. The poet must hide what is bad, not bring it forward."

Euripides then mocks at Aeschylus's high-falutin phrases. In his plays, he shows, he uses the common speech of men.

"Wretch," cries Aeschylus, "do you not know that noble ideas must be clad in noble words?"

The argument continues, and indeed is not ended in our modern generation.

Aeschylus now promises to prove that even as a realist, Euripides has a sloppy style. "Quote from any of your works you like," he challenges, "and I'll apply the oilcan."

Euripides accordingly quotes from one of his prologues:

"Aegyptus — so the common story runs —
Father of fifty sons, the salt sea crossed
And, reaching Argos —"

"Lost his oilcan," suggests Aeschylus. Euripides tries another:

"Cadmus, in olden time, Agenor's son,
Sailing from Sidon —"

"Lost his oilcan," murmurs the critic. Euripides tries again:

"The son of Tantalus, to Pisa bound,
With fleet-foot horses —"

"Lost his oilcan."

Which is effective, if unusual, literary criticism, even if I must not tell you what oilcan meant in Athenian argot.

The two poets then weigh rival lines on a grocer's scale. Euripides quotes from one of his plays:

"Would that the good ship Argo ne'er had sped —"

Aeschylus breathes into the other balance:

"Stream of Spercheius, and ye pasturing herds —"

"Cuckoo!" cries the judge, and the scale bangs down, Aeschylus's line outweighing Euripides's because "a river and a herd of cattle are heavier than a mere boat". They try again.

Euripides:

"His right hand grasped an ironweighted spear."

He has caught the idea, you see. Nevertheless Aeschylus counters:

"Chariot on chariot piled, and corpse on corpse."

A hundred Egyptians, comments the judge, couldn't lift that line. But "Let him put himself and his wife and his children and his books and his Cephisophon in the scale-pan", grants the generous Aeschylus, "I'll weigh them all down with any couple of my verses".

Cephisophon was Euripides's "ghost writer", according to the gossip of the time. The prize is awarded to Aeschylus. To the conservative satirist, realism is food for humor but not for poetry.

The "Birds" is an extravaganza notable for its comic treatment of the gods presumably worshipped in that era. The birds, at the suggestion of an Athenian social agitator, found a Nephelococcygia in midair. This cuts off the smoke of mortal sacrifices from reaching the Olympians, and the gods send down Iris, daughter of Father Zeus, to see what is wrong. Iris is quite outraged when the situation is explained to her.

"The birds are now gods," she is told. "It is to them that sacrifice must now be made; not, by Zeus, to Zeus."

"My Father shall speak to you," threatens Iris.

"No, no, my dear," begs the Athenian agitator, "you must find some younger man."

Prometheus arrives, with an umbrella. "Hold it over me," requests the cosmic rebel. "If Zeus sees me he'll think I'm just walking in a procession." (The joke is otherwise interpreted by the scholiasts, but I like to think Aristophanes had noticed that then, as now, public parades always called down a protesting rain from a bored heaven).

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Later come Poseidon, Hercules, and a Barbarian God, who, naturally enough, talks gibberish. Hercules is bribed by a cake of grated cheese to assent, as ambassador from Olympus, to the birds' terms of peace. The Greeks seem to have been on friendlier terms than we moderns are with Deity.

The "Clouds" is an attack on the Athenian equivalent of a University education. A father, whose son's passion for playing the horses has given the old man's pocketbook "a galloping consumption", goes to the Professors to learn how to argue his creditors out of collecting their bills. He enters the school of Socrates, and the first scholar he meets confides a bit of science he has just learned. A flea jumped on Socrates's head, and the scholar was determined to find out how many of its own feet a flea can jump. So the flea's foot was dipped in melted wax, the wax slippers were then removed, and used to measure the distance.

A door is opened; the old man sees the students busy in curious attitudes. They are investigating, he is told, things that are under the earth. "Why is their other end turned up?" he asks. "It is learning astronomy," he is told.

"Who is the professor way up there in the basket?"

"Himself. Socrates!"

"But why is he so suspended?"

"Shh! That's the higher education."

The old man enrolls in the University and learns to swear "By Zeus — if there is a Zeus". Educated, he returns home and teaches his son what he has learned. The son then beats up the old man, and proves by Socrates's logic that he is justified.

"Did you beat me when I was a child?"

"Yes, for your own good."

"Then why shouldn't I beat you, if beating does a person good? Besides, a father deserves to be beaten much more than a child does. He has less excuse for doing wrong."

And the young man announces he is now going to beat up his mother. This is too much for father, and he goes out and wrecks the University: no doubt to the loud applause and cheers of the audience. This little burlesque, according to Plato, was one of the contributing causes to the later execution of Socrates. Yet I am sure Aristophanes meant no malice. It was his idea of a dandy joke on his good old friend.

* * *

Is there a faint smile still in these ancient pleasantries? It does not greatly matter. The essential spirit of Aristophanes still lives elsewhere today, even if it is broken up into more bodies than he imagined in that quaint explanation of his about the origin of sex, which, if you have not read it already in Plato's Symposium, would perhaps shock you to hear now.

Punning indecencies again went out of public favor, no doubt, when Shakespeare died; the reducing of contemporary ideas and ideals to a logical absurdity was, possibly, again discontinued when a parlor Aristophanes, in the person of W. S. Gilbert, wrote his final rhyme. But the Old Comedian is still with us, thank Bacchus! in the urbane form of Mencken of Maryland, whose courage in attacking powerful demagoguery to the farthest point of ridicule diplomatically possible is nothing if not Aristophanic; in the ironic painting of human vanities, in the philosophy that man is everywhere an Icarus, of Cabell of Virginia; who, if he did not write the "Birds", has given us the kindred imaginative beauty and grotesquely human demigods of the Jurgen saga: in such slily sensible critics of life as Will Rogers, Ring Lardner, the authors of "Beggar on Horseback", Frisco, Milt Gross, and your and my other favorite clowns; and in the familiar surprises of the fantastic brothers Marx.

I have not forgotten the illustrious Chaplin. The intimate relation of the sublime to the ridiculous is notorious: and Aristophanes was too much the master of the Muse of Amusement not to be able to soar with her, when he desired, to the skies. You know the occasional perfect lyrics of Shakespeare, the clear beauty of the best of Shelley. "Full fathom five thy father lies" and "I bring fresh showers for the leaves and flowers" are, I think, very close in word-magic to the now unheard melodies of certain songs in the "Birds" and "Clouds". (Shelley's "Cloud" was, indeed, certainly suggested by the latter).

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But Aristophanes, when he sang, was not only a serenading Schubert; he had, too, the symphonic depth of Wagner, with the verve of Vincent Youmanns. And again there is not, and perhaps never can be, an English equivalent. Consider, then, his pathetic trick of beginning a chorus (as in the "Frogs") in such a breath-taking great ecstasy of melody and then, just as you are carried away on its romantic wings, stopping to blow ineffable soap-bubbles from the French horn.

There is, I said, no way of translating such sublime ridiculousness into the English language. But I wonder if the supposedly vulgar movies might not succeed where the powers of literature have failed. Chaplin, at least, spins this very gossamer of ludicrousness in his flickering mirror, wherein a little pathetically-clothed Everyman unceasingly apes the nightingales, to find each time, with a consternation that he will absurdly never learn was to be expected, that he is still an ape.

ORIENTAL RUGS

By Philip Clark

THE Weavers' Street is very dark. All the streets in Damascus are dark, but the Weavers' Street is very dark. I walk slowly through its gloom. I go slowly partly because I wish to see, partly because the uneven, mucky surface underfoot makes caution a necessity.

The sun's rays never strike down here, even at high noon. The only light comes from the smoky oil lamps in the tiny cubby-holes which line the way on either side. By this dim light, in these niche-like workshops, the weavers of Damascus ply their trade.

The looms used in the Weavers' Street are interesting machines. They are made one half of wood and cord; one half of human child. Mechanically, they are very simple. The weaver sits at one end of the wooden frame on which the cords of the warp are strung, and plies his threads as the shuttle carries them back and forth. The shuttle is carried back and forth by a child.

The child is, perhaps, six years old. Perhaps he is seven. It is difficult to judge his age with any accuracy, for he never stands erect as he runs the shuttle to and fro. He must crouch far over to reach it as he slides it from one end of the loom to the other.

Seven hunched steps he darts. That brings him to the end of the frame, and he whirls about. The handle of the shuttle is grasped by the right hand instead of the left, and it slides swiftly back along the frame. Seven steps. Then another whirling turn, and the left hand has the shuttle again. The pattering feet take their seven short steps and turn. The right hand has the shuttle. Then the left. Then the right. Then the left. Seven steps and turn. Seven steps and turn.

The child's face is a mask, a blank. It says nothing, it thinks nothing. The pattering feet, the flashing hands have no relation to that face with the little, dead eyes. The face is merely a face, carried seven steps and then seven steps by the scurrying feet.

The weaver's face says nothing. It is intent on the warm, exotic design which the red and yellow and blue threads are forming as the busy shuttle carries them to and fro.

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Sonnets to Craig

By George Sterling

The following sonnets were written by the late George Sterling (whose tragic death occurred a year ago in November) to Mary Craig Kimbrough, later Mrs. Upton Sinclair. They are a selection from a series of one hundred sonnets which Sterling addressed to "Craig" during a single year (1911), following his meeting her in New York. Some of the sonnets were written in New York and Sag Harbor, some en route to California where Sterling lived, and most of them from San Francisco, Oakland, and Glen Ellen. They formed part of the text of letters written to "Craig". This is the first publication of any of this long sequence; later they will appear in a book. The publication is with Sterling's permission. "Some day," he wrote in a letter, "when doing so can hurt neither yourself nor another, you may give them to the world."

Repentance

How shall I face thy soul? — I, dumb and blind
  Before the holy beauty of thy face!
  Stand back from me! Have mercy for a space,
Lest madness break thine image in my mind!
For now I reach, who never dreamt to find,
  The ineffable, the utmost shrine of grace,
  Ere Time of all my worship leave no trace,
And this my heart be dust upon the wind.

Thy mercy for a while! This voice to thee
  Is out of darkness and unhallowed years.
    How shall my fire against thy snows be set?
I call as though, to love that could not be,
  A fallen seraph wrote in his own tears
    His hopeless tale of heavenly regret.

From the Gloom

As one who, wandering in doubt and pain,
  Where waters dark and winds of midnight moan
  In some far wilderness as yet unknown,
Peers out upon a wide and trackless plain
Through night no moon nor friendly stars attain,
  And seeks a refuge or a signal shown,
  Till, baffled, desperate, astray, alone,
He sees at last a light across the rain, —

So I, in darkness that thou canst not dream
  Of late a wanderer, uplift mine eyes
    And tremble, by thy distant radiance drawn.
Across life's plain I watch thy mystic beam,
  My goal beneath the re-enchanted skies:
    What is it thou shalt grant me — dusk or dawn?

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A Prayer

God, Thou who bringest morning out of night,
  Bring her to me, so more to me than morn!
  Fair as those roses of Thine east reborn
From pure abysses of celestial light,
So let her steal on my adoring sight,
  So let her greet me, I who go forlorn,
  By wildest hope and fears unceasing torn,
Who, finding Love, have found him in his might.

But bring her not as morning comes, to *go*,
  Nor mock me with a fleeting Paradise,
    Though in her face its holiest flowers live!
Yea! knowing her, what more remains to know?
  For I have gazed within her tender eyes,
    And found Thee there, and all Thou hast to give!

At the Grand Canyon

Thou settest splendors in my sight, O Lord!
  It seems as though a deep-hued sunset falls
  Forever on these Cyclopean walls,
These battlements where Titan hosts have warred,
And hewn the world with devastating sword,
  And shook with trumpets the eternal halls
  Where Seraphim lay hid by bloody palls
And only Hell and Silence were adored.

Lo! the abyss wherein the wings of Death
Might beat unchallenged, and his fatal breath
  Fume up in pestilence. Beneath the sky
    Is no such testimony unto grief.
  Here Terror walks with Beauty ere she die.
    Oh! hasten to me, Love, for life is brief!

By Lonely Waters

Hope said: "These are the sands that she shall tread
  And this the sea whereon her gaze shall rest,
  For she shall seek thee in the lordly West.
In yonder woodlands shall her feet be led,
And as a lily shall she lay her head
  On thine impassioned and enchanted breast.
  She shall know all, and know that love is best,
Beside the ocean when the West is red."

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Aye! so her music trembled at my heart
And built in flame the Garden of my Dream,
And died, and was a portion of the Past;
But ere those wings were lifted to depart,
Her music blossomed to a note supreme —
The cry of famished lips that meet at last.

Passion's Hour

To-day the flesh contemns the craven mind
And revels like a tiger in the sun;
I drink the noon's elixir, and am one
With fauns that seek the Oreads, as I find
A passionate compulsion in the wind,
Upon whose path the cloudland chariots run
To some remote and airy Avalon,
Where Joy is crowned, nor any nymph unkind.

To-day the tender mystery of thy soul
Seems half-forgot, nor utterly my goal:
I crave thy lips, I crave the flame thereof —
Mad for that hour of ecstasy and fire
In which the deathless pinions of Desire
Are shadows on the semi-swoon of love.

Hope's Paradise

How exquisitely, darling, art thou made
For love! Thy body, all of pearl and rose,
Hath passion's keenest rapture to disclose,
Though like a pure and perfect lily, laid
On Aphrodite's altar, ne'er to fade
If Dian comes full-envious, and shows
Her wannest lilies in the moonlight's snows.
Thou art Love's sun, as other loves his shade!

Ah! would that in a secret dusk we lay,
On gathered hearts of Eden's whitest flowers,
With ghosts of Eden's fragrance on the air,
Breast unto breast in swoon too sweet to say
What ecstasy was blossom of the hours,
What mystery was Love's supremest care!

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Love the Transmuter

I, who was lonely Beauty's loner priest,
(If solitude of heart so testify)
Stand loneliest now, with all that heart a sigh.
The music of the world has never ceased;
Still bloom the dawn's wide lilies on the east,
And still the faces of the gods go by,
But down at evening from the quiet sky,
When spirits muse, dream-held and dream-released.

What sun has made Time's mystery a light,
Simple and splendid as the litten Dew
By day-warm grasses gathered from the night?
What golden spell is on familiar things,
That all seem marvellously strange and new, —
That sunset now seems thronged with heavenly wings?

The Font of Beauty

Because of thee the star-crossed dome of night
Adds love and rapture to infinity;
Wherefore should sunsets burn, except that we
Drain to our souls the splendors of their flight?
With thee shall I tread Andes of delight
Beneath my feet as mole-hills, till I see
That God Himself is sure because of thee,
And thou and I dear children in His sight.

Thy hands have strewn the roses of the dawn;
Thy face repays for every flower that dies;
Thy whisper is the song Astarte sings!
Thy grace hath caught its silence from the faun;
Thy heart hath stolen starlight from the skies;
Thy spirit is the wind of Beauty's wings!

The Inexorable Hour

Methought the Spirit of the Night took form
And stood before me with despotic brow,
Crying: "Thy love's embrace allures thee now,
And now the haven of her breast is warm,
And still her star is empress of the swarm
My wings o'ershadow. Make her then thy vow.
Still to the heavens of her beauty bow
And orbs the angels of my House shall storm!

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Yea! list awhile the love-linked words she saith,
Which bar my dreadful music from thine ears;
But I am sister of unsparing Death,
And soon my hands shall hold her dust and thine —
The harvest of annihilating years
When seas are stilled and suns no longer shine!"

The Joys Unchanging

The stars' communion, and the Night's pure powers,
The cry of Music and her mystery,
The sweep and domination of the sea,
The ever-blessèd faces of the flowers
Lifted to Spring's re-animating showers,
And Slumber's consolation, and the free
Elysian winds — they mock satiety,
Nor lose their magic with the cloying hours.

From these Time steals no glory. As of old
Their bliss and charm depart not, but enfold,
As vaster things, the spirit. Years efface
Our pomps, but here no disenchantment mars.
Remains one other thing that shares their grace:
The words, "I love thee!" Such are as the stars.

Search Rewarded

I waited thee through sacrificial years,
And till thou camest all my soul was blind.
'Tis written, "He that seeketh, he shall find,"
And I have sought thy face in all the spheres,
Still haunted by the voice that no man hears
Save from the Love unknown but well divined.
O Rose beyond the questings of the wind!
O Star mine eyes must see through many tears!

Thou art the silence in my soul, and thou
The kiss of things unseen upon my brow.
O loveliness the sorrowed night hath dreamed
And dawn found perfect! Harp of mystery
Upon whose chords forgotten moons have gleamed,
Within whose voice are voices of the sea

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The Burden of the Past

Fool that I was to dream I loved before!
But now a sweeter worship lets me know
What ghosts I followed in the long ago,
What weeds my heart's neglected garden bore,
Where now one rose is splendid evermore,
And where I wander ministrant and slow,
As those incomparable petals glow,
And give my soul their beauty o'er and o'er.

Craig, ever thus I wander and repent,
Slave of a thousand ecstasies and fears,
Too humble to be sure, too glad to flee,
And all too glad in love's one punishment —
The heart's slow scorn, augmenting with the years,
For all that had not birth and life in thee.

Sunset

Save of the heart there is no loneliness,
And thou hast made mine own one ache for thee —
A subtle pain, a bliss exalting me
Till memory is made thy wild caress.
Heaven is no more, and earth can be no less
Nor any dream of either cease to be
Thy lure, thy meaning and thy mystery,
With joys that rack, and agonies that bless.

Ere twilight strike the golden fields to gray,
I murmur "Craig! Belovèd!" to the day,
Till all the world is music to my heart.
Yea! till from soundless peaks of western flame
I seem to hear, O goddess that thou art!
The dying lips of sunset breathe thy name.

Love's Shadow

Great love is ever sorrow. In some way
I cannot picture but must always feel,
Grief to great love is sacrament and seal —
On love's blue dome a distant cloud of gray;
A hush beyond the music of the day;
A tabernacle pure where mourners kneel;
A sunset fair on which the night shall steal;
Belovèd starlight that the dawn shall slay.

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Ah! we who love, think not that we shall miss
That sense of things too lovely to endure!
For souls that know, as thine, his gracious lure,
The seraph Sorrow hath his hidden skies,
And when I gain thy lips I somehow kiss
That lonely angel of the solemn eyes.

Eros in Heaven

Our love is all of crystal and of fire:
The body's scarlet and the spirit's white
Take as a star their splendor from the night,
Which is Love's day. So ere his day expire,
Ah! lead me to that Heaven of high desire
Where soul and body gain the final height —
Welded in dumb convulsions of delight —
To which unmingled they in vain aspire.

Oh! harken, on the silences of Fate,
The god within me calling to his mate,
And with thy madnesses accord to me,
Whom visions cheat and fantasies enmesh,
The fierce, inseparable ecstasy, —
The fury of the joy-tormented flesh!

A Midnight

The silent and insufferable night
Lies round me like the sea about its dead.
My hopes are fostered and my heart is fed
By gleam and glamor of thy face's light,
My final star of Fate and meed of sight.
Thy love is like a glory round my head —
A moon undarkened and a splendor shed
From life's last pinnacle and breathless height.

Ah! dearest! that my passion and its fire
Might wrap thy bosom in ecstatic flame,
And crush thee to the breast of my desire,
In rapture all too vast for song to name!
Yea! till we cried with compensated breath:
"God! I have *lived!* release me now to death!"

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Transmutation

Thine alchemy hath touched familiar things
  And made of each a fairer than I know;
  For now when music wakens, 'tis as though
Thy soul had spoken. Never linnet sings
But what my heart flies forth on wilder wings
  Than his; and when the winds in whispers go,
  From gardens where thou art they seem to blow,
And weave thy voice amid their murmurings.

And in each other sense my heart hath found
All that thy subtle magic gives to sound;
  For sight hath memories exquisite with thee,
    And past all bliss of Heaven mad with bliss —
  Ah! past its deepest dream of ecstasy! —
    Sink on my lips the roses of thy kiss.

Kindred

Musing, between the sunset and the dark,
  As Twilight in unhesitating hands
  Bore from the faint horizon's underlands,
Silvern and chill, the moon's phantasmal ark,
I heard the sea, and far away could mark
  Where that unalterable waste expands
  In sevenfold sapphire from the mournful sands,
And saw beyond the deep a vibrant spark.

There sank the sun Arcturus, and I thought:
  Star, by an ocean on a world of thine,
    May not a being, born, like me, to die,
Confront a little the eternal Naught
  And watch our isolated sun decline —
    Sad for his evanescence, even as I?

Love and Joy

Oh! doubt not Love can live on dreams alone,
  If so they be forevermore of thee!
  From frailest hope he draws sweet certainty,
Seizing the wingèd bliss before 'tis flown,
Plucking the blossom ere the seed be sown,
  And crushing wine from clusters yet to be.
  Despair itself becomes an ecstasy,
And tears diviner things than Peace hath known.

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Ever upon the gloom he sees the star,
And steals Today's uncompensated flowers
To cast before Tomorrow's glimmering feet.
His bride is Joy, although she roam afar,
Whose laughter on the inestimable hours
Falls from the heavens wherein her wings are fleet.

Coronation

These fragile gifts I send thee, dearest dear —
Three gathered leaves of ivy, orange, bay:
The first in memory of that magic day
When first our clinging arms and lips drew near;
The second is for pledge of joy so sheer
The very thought thereof is sweet dismay.
Ah! Craig! Love leads us on a dazzling way
Whose rapture, not whose woe, I seem to fear!

But then that third, the fragrant laurel! There
Is symbol of the recompense we hold
For this gray world in which we gain such bliss.
Thence were the crowns that heroes bent to share,
When, to the music of their Age of Gold,
Pure on their brows fell Fame's transcendent kiss.

Adoration

Soon come the winter days, when white Altair
Spreads wings above the sunset. Soon the snow,
A fleeting seed the twilight heavens sow,
Descends from frigid levels of the air;
Chill grow the evenings we were born to share,
And mute the hours wherein our souls might grow.
Ah! make not Death our passion's afterglow,
Nor mix my final worship with despair!

Come soon, for soon a night is on our years,
And soon the kissing lips have dust to taste!
Love! I await thee with my flesh a flame.
Oh! breast to breast, and mouths a-salt with tears
Of rending bliss, soon let us lie! Make haste!
For music's heart is holy with thy name!

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Love's Primacy

Love, the one holiness — shall I resist
His all-consuming flame, and dare to think
That thus my soul has broken any link
Of fleshly chains? For chains are all as mist
To those who turn from grosser chords to list
Love's consecrating harmonies, and drink
Where flowers tremble at his fountain's brink —
Pure as a lily that thy lips have kissed.

Nay! I will turn me to the evening stars
(Some hushed and jewelled dusk where roses die)
And crave thy passion and the breath thereof,
Wasting my soul on Time's investing bars,
And bearing in the heart thou makest high
That pain which is the shadow cast by Love.

To Thy Heart

Believest thou in God? For sombre years
I said: "He is not! If He be, His hand
Is red with sinless blood, and His command
Decrees to man no harvest save of tears;
His angels wander hateful through the spheres,
And we that hunger for a deathless land
Pass like the foam upon the midnight sand!"
So to the stars I uttered half my fears.

So the stars I stammered, full of dread.
Then, as a star where mist has been before,
Thy heavenly face within my heart was set,
And doubt befell my doubtings, and I said:
"She is: shall not we be forevermore?
And love? And God?" Alas! I know not yet!

By the Western Ocean

Craig! Craig! my Love irradiant and divine!
Here on the solitary sands I lie
And see afar the lingering sunset die,
As peacefully its fading splendors shine
On western wave and on the eastern pine;
And oh! to watch with thee that flaming sky,
My heart one joy, one sacrament, one cry —
The heart whose very silences are thine!

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The glory passes . . . Lo! the moon is up,
Remote and pure, that silvern, ancient cup
From which earth drinks enchantment. Love! to be
Its insubstantial pearl upon thy face!
Ah! dearest! for an hour of thine embrace,
Hushed by the deathless music of the sea!

Reborn

What realms my memories of thee enfold!
Never I read a tear-compelling tale
Of queens that loved, or hero-vassaled grail,
But what the glimmer of thy locks of gold
Is on the heart's horizon, and I hold
The paths of legend, clad in blessèd mail,
Far-following thy shadow till it fail,
Or change to sorrow's star, forlornly cold.

Ah! Craig! and shall I lose thee? In thy face
Meet all the visions, beautiful and sad,
That woke man's hunger in the perished years,
When heroes travailed for a dream's embrace,
And marshaled where the swords of death were glad,
And sought thy lips beyond a thousand spears.

The Lute-Player

Then said I to the unassenting day:
"Die swiftly!" And to Sleep: "Possess thou me,
That thy nepenthe drug me utterly!
O hide thou me from Love, whose arrows slay
The peace for which I travail. Let my way
Along the waters of oblivion be,
And lead by Lethe to the ghostly sea
No star shall haunt nor moon of passion sway!"

So spake I in my sorrow. Now the night
Lift stars to make thy memory a pang,
The moon to hint thy mystery in light,
And I am fain of Love and his despair.
Return, O Day, the golden chords that rang,
The aureate arrows and the yellow hair!

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The Hidden Goddess

Thou hast been human ever. None the less,
It seemed a captive radiance in thee slept
Not all of earth — a mystic light that leaped
Within thine eyes, which could not all suppress
Their heavenly betrayal, nor confess
What spirit stirred within their deeps and kept
Angelic wardenship of tears unwept —
A subtle, wild and starry loveliness.

Sweet, thou dost lift my soul to breathless heights.
Some beauty once I cherished, but thou hast
Been moon of unimaginable nights.
Beauty I knew, but how could I know thee?
For, till their eyes behold its waves at last,
The desert-born imagine not the sea.

The Path to Paradise

Of all that tapestry which is the past,
Sweet, I would change no slightest hue nor thread;
For little though the change, my feet were led
Thereby to altars other than thou hast.
Ah God! how small a step, and I, outcast,
Had never seen the rays of splendor shed
From Love's uplifted and refulgent head,
Nor stood within thy spirit's light at last.

And so there is no pain I do not bless,
Nor any hunger thou dost not suffice;
Nor would I have life's scheme one woe the less,
Since such have led from nothingness to thee,
Whom lacking, I had won not Paradise,
Nor evermore Love's all and ecstasy.

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MUSIC IN THE DISTANCE

By Abbe Niles

THE object of these lines is the congenial one of cracking up a hobby. For anyone who can read simple music at the piano, it has all the points of the ideal avocation: it is harmless; while mildly instructive, it serves no really useful purpose — in particular, there is no money in it — and can therefore be pursued with a pure heart; it rewards its patron with a sense (however baseless) of erudition; it impresses the neighbors. It is the collecting and study of the big volumes in which our ancestors, from pre-Revolutionary times up to (but unfortunately not including) the 1890's, took the pains to bind up their music-hall and parlor songs. They are still to be found, and save where they contain rare lithograph covers and the like — in which case knowing dealers mercilessly mutilate them — they are not highly valued. Nose them out, cart them home, and proceed to note on separate sheets of paper whatever in each folio is remarkable for its music, what for its words, for its historical associations, for the names of its writers or of the singers who introduced it, for its cover-design, for certain advertisements on the back, for the annotations of former owners, for anything that will bear investigation at the public library — for anything you fancy. Then, if you are thorough, index, card-index and cross-index as you will, read up on the slender literature of the subject, and even add to it. But whether or not you go thus far, do not forego the satisfaction of watching your friends paw over, admire and covet your acquisitions, for they will not be laid aside without comment. They have the irresistibly attractive quality of bringing one face to face with out-dated treatments of perennial subjects — the attraction of Victorian fashion-plates and old outrageous maps — combined with that of whatever awakens sentimental memories or corroborates and amplifies, as it recalls, the accounts we sceptically and unwillingly accepted from forgotten school-teachers. The remainder of these notes will take, for an example of the gait and management of this hobby, a single such musty volume, divulging a few of the secrets which it yields to the humblest Watsonian detective work aided only by a musical dictionary or two, an encyclopaedia of names, and Sonneck's "Early Opera in America".

Micah Hawkins, *requiescat in pace*, loved a good tune. To be more accurate, he seems to have loved any tune at all. He bought the songs of his day, and such as he could not buy — or, perhaps, remembered from a reading at the music-counter — he wrote out, words and music, in his own fine hand; some he obtained in one way or another from one H. Walker. He then bound them into stout folios, laboriously indexed and sometimes annotated them, and it is quite obvious that he played and replayed them. When he was born I know not, nor when he died, but plainly he lived in one of the Eastern states, probably New York, and just a century ago last July 11th, his widow presented his collection to H. S. Mount. At this point the visible chain of title is broken, but today Volume V. rests awhile in my possession, and if anyone owning some of its mates will come forward, I will hear something to my advantage.

Congress had afforded no protection to composers when Volume V. was compiled, and therefore other evidence than copyright notices must be sought to date its contents. This is not hard to find. Two instrumental pieces are helpful: "Washington's March", Sonneck tells us, accompanied an allegorical procession of figures from history which followed "The Celebrated Dramatic Masque of Arthur and Emmeline; or, The Prospect of Columbia's Future Glory", as presented in New York in 1800, the year after the first president's death. Washington's Secretary of the Treasury fell in 1804, which adequately dates "General Hamilton's Funeral March" and also "The Dead March

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in Saul, As Preformed (*sic.*) at General HAMILTON'S Funeral, Composed by Mr. Handel". A number of songs bear the names of English operettas performed in America during the 1790's; of these, Charles Dibdin's "The Islanders" (composed 1780) gives the earliest conjectural date of acquisition of any item in the volume (probably too early, as this is an American edition of the song), while General Hamilton supplies the latest.

Today jazz sends its missionaries around the earth, but in Hawkins's time Americans for the greater part imported their lighter music from London and Dublin, and British and American song formed a homogeneous body. "Mr." (James) Hook would compose a ballad; with "great" or even "universal" applause (to adopt the fine distinctions of the advertisements), it would be sung at the great London music-hall, Vauxhall Gardens, and soon copies, printed here or imported, would be available for impatient sons of Columbia at Hewitt's Musical Repository in New York, at Willig's in Philadelphia; even in Boston, where until 1793 opera companies could escape jail — if at all — only by billing their shows as "Lectures, Moral and Entertaining", and where to this day a Sunday movie is officially known as a Sacred Concert. Elegant and unctuous were the introductions which these publishers gave their editions (editions supplemented with additional versions for the German flute and Spanish guitar): "Tid Re I, or The Marriage of Miss Kitty O'Donovan to Mr. Paddy O'Rafferty — Sung by Mr. Twaits at the Theatre with Unbounded Applause"; while they advertised their current lists, not by a few lines of music and a curt "Try this on your piano", but by such suave but comprehensive suggestions inserted in their titles themselves as the one reproduced herewith.

What, from Mr. Hawkins's evidence, was the state of the popular song he knew? One is struck by the frequent appearance of syncopation, but this is merely the ancient "Scotch Snap" of "Comin' Through The Rye", and far removed from ragtime. The emphasis in these often crudely harmonized songs is on the tune, not the treatment. This is characteristic of popular music generally, but there is nothing one can earmark as American, while the sharp line which now divides "classical" and would-be classical from commercio-popular is almost non-existent in these pages. If there was a distinction, it was straddled by the successful writers, Hook, Dibdin, Stephen Storace, William Shield (Musician in Ordinary to His Majesty, and composer of one of the gems of the collection, a graceful and melancholy thing in the lyric Scottish tradition, called "Sally Roy"). These were accomplished musicians; their songs are tricked out with trills and cadenzas for such operatic stars as Mrs. Billington and Signora Anna Selina Storace; among their works, rondos of Handel and the elder Bach, set to words, are by no means grotesquely out of place. The lesser writers generally cleave to the same models. In sentimental mood, they borrow from English or Scotch folksong or Italian opera; in lighter vein, from English models again, or from the Irish. Emigrations here from Germany are fifty years ahead, and with them, the comic "Dutch dialect" epidemic; no one seems yet to have seized upon the Negro as a butt, much less as a mine of melody and rhythm, and the only hint (if, coming from England, it can be called a hint) of what is to come in this respect, is a cryptic affair called Orra's First Song, from "The Islanders", which begins:

> When Yanko dear fight far away
> One token kind me send;
> One branch of Olive, for dat say
> Me wish de battle end.
> De Poplar tremble while him go,
> Say of dy life take care,
> Me send no Laurel, for me know
> Of dat he find him share.

Here is a sample quarry for the determined investigator. A complete score of "The Islanders" might solve the problems: is the scene, by chance, the West Indies? Is Orra a Negro or a native of those islands? Or was this song interpolated in the United States? Does its weird dialect agree with any that was actually current, just after the Revolution? I sit back to await a reply.

Ireland, regardless of her political state, is in her glory here, with Dublin furnishing a

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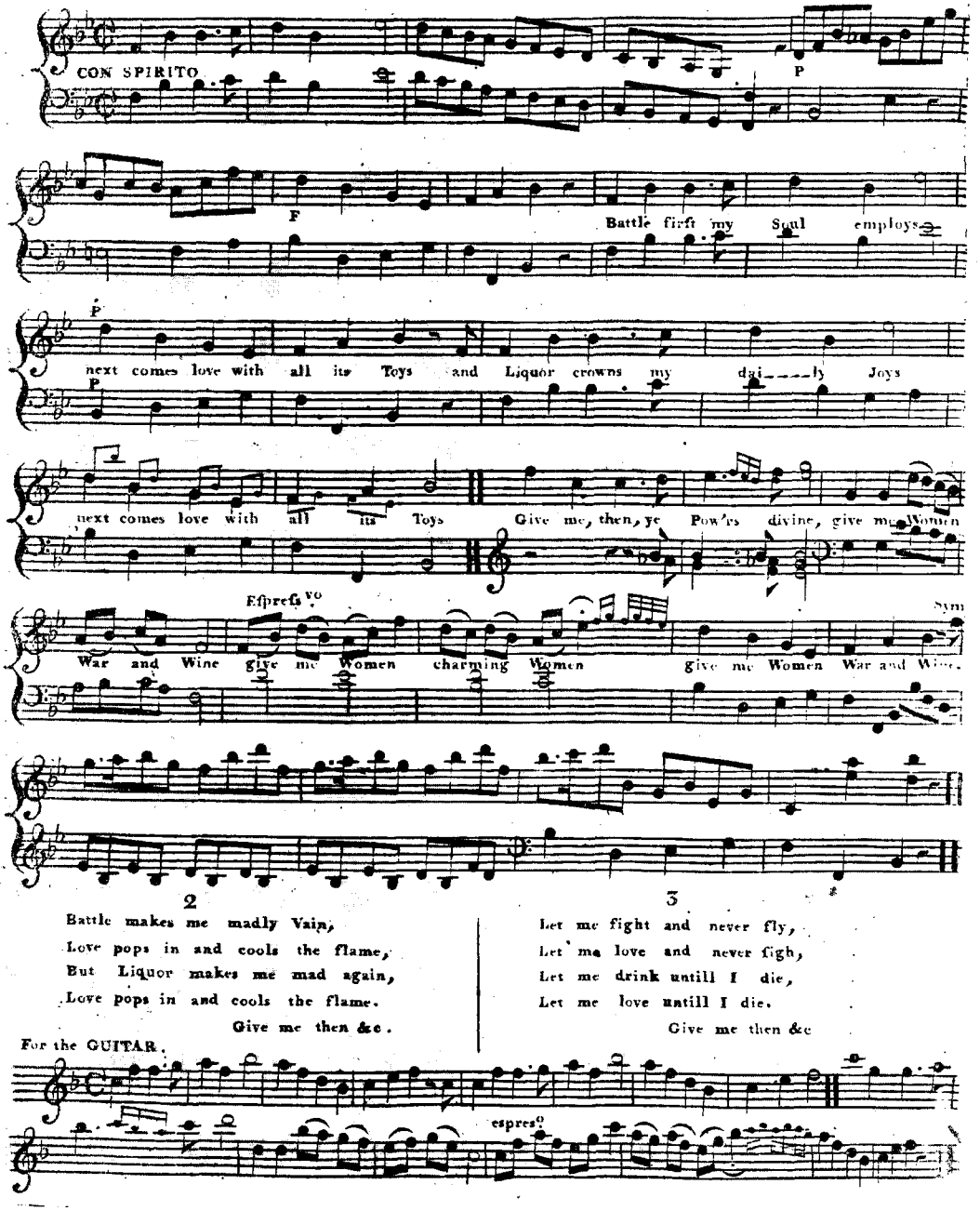
WOMEN WAR AND WINE

An admired Song in the CRUSADE. as Sung by Mr INCLEDON. composed by Mr SHIELD.

DUBLIN Publifhed by HIME. at his Mufical circulating Library. N° 34 College Green. near the Poft Office



An unjustly forgotten song of the 1790's. [The words, credited to "Reynolds", may also be found in the Universal Songster (London 1825)]

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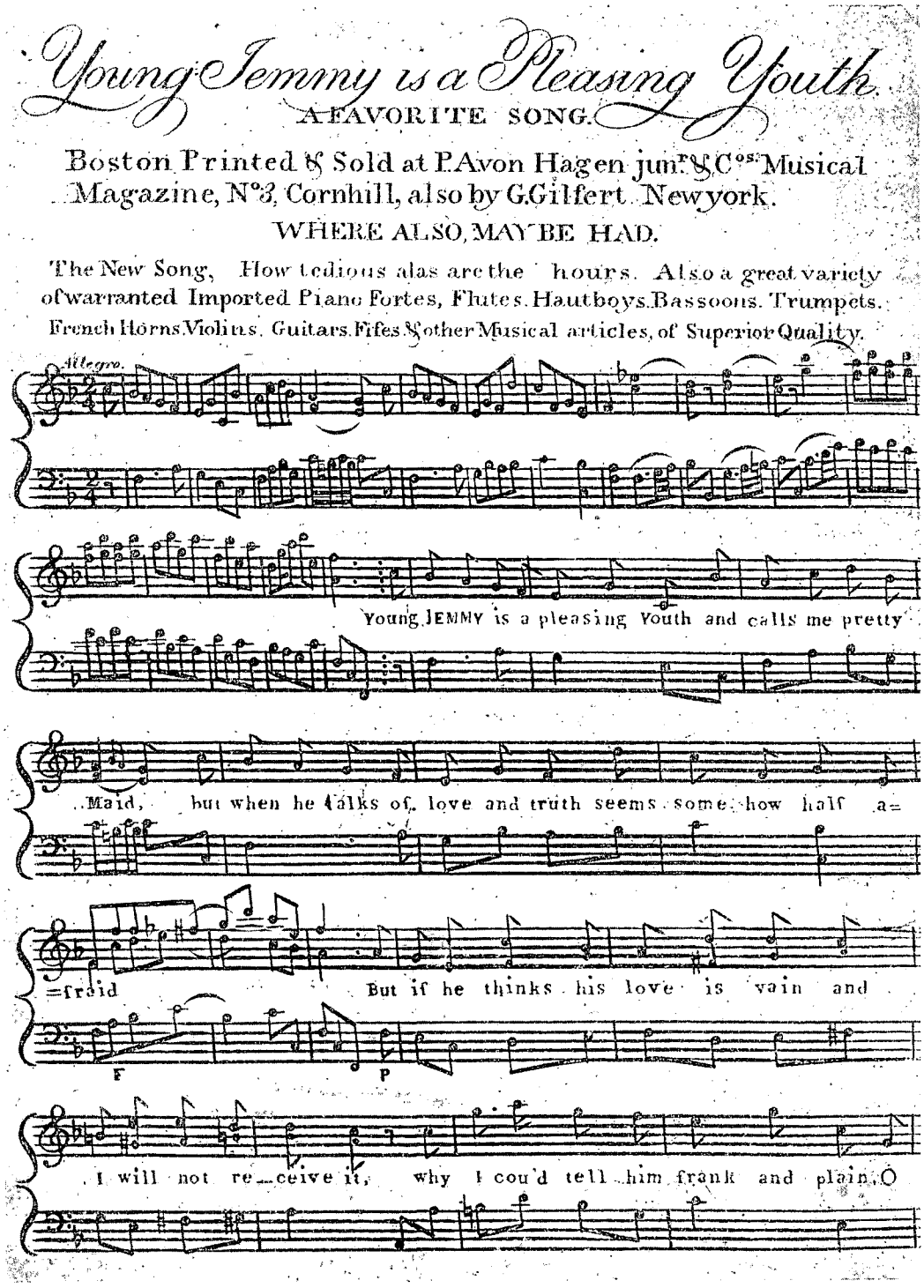

A typical title page from the early days of American song-publishing.

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third of the collection. The legendary Paddy O'Rafferty is a household word. His wedding (see the title quoted above) to Miss O'Donovan is recounted with immense gusto in verses interspersed with comic dialogue, but he is best known by the part he plays in another naughty and very catchy ballad, whose tune is here found reproduced separately as a rondo and as a dance, and which recounts his courtship and marriage to quite a different lady. O'Rafferty's ignorant compatriot Paddy O'Doody hears the then famous opera "Pizarro" at the Theatre Royal in Crow Street, and soon his naïve account of the evening is being sung on the same stage by Mr. Stewart and the song shipped over to the waiting Micah Hawkins. Our Atlantic seaboard is overrun with companies playing operettas from London: "The Crusade", "The Surrender of Calais", "Lock And Key", "The Children In The Wood", "My Grandmother", and the "elegant and fashionable 'Pasticcio', The Evening Brush for rubbing off the Rust of Care", which Sonneck describes as "a curious mixture of recitations, songs and such pieces as 'The Battle of Prague'". The redoubtable Englishman John Hodgkinson, a singer and an embattled impresario of the day, is ranging up and down the coast with his celebrated Old Americans Company, putting on these shows, singing their best numbers, and adorning the title-pages of the songs with the names of himself and his wife.

It is a far cry from the stilted sentiments, the elegantly classical allusions, in the lyrics before us, to the slap-dash of 1927. For a demonstration we may take the following lines, in which the soldier Sandy, the manly yet self-appreciative lover of Arabella, the Caledonian Maid, records his satisfaction at the signing of an armistice:

. . . And had not Wars terriffic Voice
Forbid the nuptial bands,
Ere now had Sandy been her choice
And Hymen joined our hands,
But since the sword of War is sheathed,
And pease resumes her charms,
My ev'ry joy is now bequeathed
To ARABELLA'S arms.

As Sandy's magnanimous tone suggests, the part assigned to the lady in a love-affair of his time carries the privilege of hope, but of little less humble. It is pretty clearly outlined in a ballad of Mr. Hook's, in reading which, one must realize that granting it may gild a bit the lily of reality, yet it was written and doubtless heard seriously:

He says he'll buy me Breast-Knots red,
A Cap and Bonnet too,
With Ribbands to adorn my Head,
Pink, Yellow, Green and Blue.
A' this he vows I shall receive,
I'm sure he means Sincerely
I canna Donald disbelieve,
For DONALD loves me dearly.

Since first my DONALD told his Tale,
He ne'er has been unkind,
And last Night in the silent Vale
He told me a' his Mind;
By what he there declar'd to me
The Time is come, or nearly,
When I my DONALD'S Bride shall be,
For DONALD loves me dearly.

The modern sentimental song is soppy, but it has lost such innocence as this, one fears, forever.

Yet elsewhere in the landscape seen through Micah Hawkins's window there can be made out familiar landmarks. For a little one, observe Mr. Carter's title: "Oh William! I Will Gang With Thee — An Answer to — Oh Nanny Wilt Thou Gang With Me?" Here is proof that the Answer-Song theory, whereby the 1927 "Hello, Bluebird!" follows, as the night the day, the 1926 "Bye-Bye, Blackbird!" is no twentieth-century discovery. And when one turns to the patriotic, the comic and the convivial departments, one commences to overlook S's that look like F's, and to feel at home. "Columbia And Liberty" is the somewhat nervous and plaintive, if valiant, defiance of a strong nation by a weak one, but its boasts are typical of the jingo-jingle throughout our history, as is the charming impudence with which this piece of American abuse of France, with a nasty side-swipe at England, is set to the very tune of "Rule, Britannia!" with the unembarrassed credit-line "Composed by Dr. Arne". France is catching it almost simultaneously from English tap-room choruses, but in how different a tone! In "What Is Liberty?" (by George Savile

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Carey, son of the famous Henry of "God Save The King") we have the very roast-beef of verse. Hearing certain echoes from republican France of the strange word "Liberty" a yokel asks its meaning, and is answered by the apoplectic poet in four such verses as these:

'Tis trying without reason Sir,
To propogate high treason Sir,
Or cut a brother's wheezen Sir,
That is Liberty.
To knock your neighbor down Sir,
If ever it were known Sir,
That he possessed a crown Sir,
That is Liberty.

To set up Guillotines Sir,
To murder Kings and Queens Sir,
And all such pretty scenes Sir,
That is Liberty.
To pull down Church and State Sir,
At any kind of rate Sir,
Or knock you o'er the pate Sir,
That is Liberty.

The interlocutor naturally concludes:

. . . The times are bad Sir,
The folks are surely mad Sir,
For making such a bad stir,
If that be Liberty.

However present-minded, one must confess that there was a robustness to some of the more convivial catches Hawkins knew, which would now be hard to match. These are lusty, full-bellied hymns to good living, free of the discordant minors of apology or of chicken-hearted moral doubt:

Smiling Grog is the Sailor's best hope, his Sheet Anchor,
His Compass, his Cable, his Log —
That gives him a heart which life's cares cannot canker,
Tho' dangers around him unite to confound him
He braves them and tips off his Grog.
'Tis Grog, only Grog is his Rudder,
His Compass, his Cable, his Log —
The Sailor's Sheet Anchor is Grog!

Let whosoever has the heart compare the above with the dismal "Farewell to Grog" sung on American ships sixty years later on the abolition of the grog ration, and to be found in the recently published "Book of Navy Songs". But while "The Sailor's Sheet Anchor" may not deserve immortality, it seems incredible that in even these degenerate days neither words nor music of Shield's magnificent "Women, War and Wine" are current, and it is with mingled pride and shame that it is here resurrected and printed in full:

Battle first my Soul employs
Next Comes Love with all its Toys
And Liquor crowns my daily joys —
Next comes Love with all its toys.

Chorus:
Give me, then, ye Pow'rs divine
Give me Women, War and Wine —
Give me Women, charming Women —
Give me Women, War and Wine!

Battle makes me madly Vain,
Love pops in and cools the flame,
But Liquor makes me mad again —
Love pops in and cools the flame.

Let me fight and never fly,
Let me love and never sigh,
Let me drink until I die —
Let me love until I die!

It is disturbing that the custom of binding up one's sheet music no longer exists; that perhaps because popular song has now so diverged from "classical" as to come under a vague reproach, it now reaches the ashcan at each successive move to a new apartment. Much of it deserves the ashcan, and yet if there is to be no discrimination, it would be better to hold than to destroy all, and lacking space, to give it away to one who might preserve it. No less than the motley collection which has been considered here, the stuff which now litters the top of the piano will some day afford, in a way peculiar to songs, a living picture of a dead age. A copy, for instance, of "I Didn't Raise My Boy To Be A Soldier", will yet be well worth having with or without a clipping of Colonel Roosevelt's spirited comments thereon; indeed, at the age of only twelve years is it not something to meditate on already?

Since the above was written, Grenville Vernon, by publishing his admirable study "Yankee Doodle Doo", has opened new windows through which are visible not only some of

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the scenes with which I have just dealt, but the form of Micah Hawkins himself. Not content with forever poring over the work of others, the old boy at last burst forth with his own operetta, "The Saw-Mill, or, a Yankee Trick", and on November 29th, 1824, at Chatham Garden, New York, it was duly produced and ran thereafter for a number of performances. The scenes featured the Grand [Erie] Canal, just opened that year, and one exhibited The Saw-Mill itself, and all Machinery in motion. The music of the songs (with orchestral accompaniments by James Hewitt, Esq.) is lost, but Vernon remarks that if it was as bad as Hawkins's verse, the world has lost a masterpiece. Thus, to the little-demanding collector of old songs, does the chance wind bring his modest delights. *A. N.*

ETCHING

By Jerry Burke

IN every town there is a street that runs to the sea. Some of the streets do not have far to go. Some of the streets go farther than a man can walk. Children in the inner lands often hear beautiful sounds in their sleep, like waves beating against rocks.

"I should like to take this little street in my arms," said a man one day, walking on stones between houses. The street had its fingers in the sea, washing them, for they were very dirty. A ship moaned at anchor. Pushcarts were carrying green things that were going into the houses, green things that people would put in their mouths and wash down with wine. "I should like to take this little street in my arms," said the man.

An old boat rotted at anchor because men had given up dreams. A ship rotting at anchor is like an old maid withering. "Why don't you come out where the water is deep?" The tide asks this question every time it goes out, and when it comes in it picks up the question and tosses it about. "Four Winds" is the name painted on the ship, and rust feeds on the letters. Gulls fly over, and sea gulls are the ghosts of drowned sailors come back to haunt doomed ships. White wings and sails have much in common.

"We have no lovers," said the man to the ship. There were lovers behind him and lovers in front of him, but he could not walk up to them and say words to them. He had the words in his heart, words without end, and sometimes he took a handful and threw them away, if no one was looking, but he always had some left, and the prettiest ones were on the very bottom. Some he hadn't even touched. Ships at sea pass and signal, but men and women pass and are afraid.

A clock made twelve sounds, and the sun was above tired heads. Men were going into a crowded place to get clam chowder and rolls. Someone was collecting white tickets with holes punched in them. Every man had a ticket and some silver discs. They were sad and quiet when they parted with the discs. "I could take this boat out to sea if I had enough of those silver discs," said the man who had nothing but words.

The water was mumbling to itself, like an old man who had forgotten to die. Now the sea was too old to die. "Sea-water and tears," said the man with no lover, throwing away a handful of words, "have the same taste. Do all tears run to the sea? Mine will not have far to go."

In every town there is a street that runs to the sea.

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WHY I PREFER TO LIVE IN A SMALL TOWN

By Emily Newell Blair

IT has remained for THE BOOKMAN to be the first and, so far as I know, the only magazine to intimate ever so condescendingly that some virtue can ever reside elsewhere than in the city. In an article in a recent number, a New Yorker, presumably, even goes so far as to suggest that the leisure offered by rural life may have a value equal to the contacts of the city. Diffidently and doubtfully he presents the suggestion as a possibility. None the less is it welcomed by those of us who have our own opinion of the city, an opinion honored in its suppression, for not a whisper of it is permitted to find publication in a New York magazine. And yet a few frank statements as to what we ruralists think of the city might, one would think, have value. Failing an opportunity to express those opinions I may be permitted to say why I for one, at least, having sampled life in both city and town, prefer life in the latter.

Three times I've moved to a city. Three times I've moved back to my small town. This time, I think, to stay. Many of my city friends ask me the question: "Why?" in some form or other — "Why have you moved back to Small Town? How can you stand life in that quiet place after being at the center of things here? Are you going to stay? Do you prefer it?"

Since the answer involves the whole debate of city life versus town life, it may be interesting to others.

My first move to a city, not counting my college years, was the third year after my marriage. My husband's business took us to a city. I must acknowledge I went with pleasant anticipation. Had I not longed for a wider experience? Didn't I want a broader life? My husband, being wiser, had his reservations.

In Small Town I had had a crowd of friends, given and attended many parties, and had a pretty wardrobe designed to meet the requirements of a social life. The story of this wardrobe is the story of the change the city made in my social life for, except for the street dress I used at home for marketing, I never wore one garment of it in the city.

Did I have no social life? Not as from Small Town experience, I understood social life. A number of my school friends were married and lived in the city. Some of my more prosperous relations had houses in fashionable neighborhoods. But my friends invited me to lunch down town, to dine at hotels, to take five o'clock tea and to play cards at their clubs, for all of which a street dress was the proper thing. All of these girls lived in apartments. They did not keep maids. They got their own breakfasts and dinners when they did not "dine out" — meaning in public. I lived in a boarding house, doing my own entertaining also in public. Now in Small Town I had had only five rooms but one of them was a guest room and one a dining-room. I had kept a servant. Breakfast was neatly done, dinner a function every day. We had guests in at least twice a week, when we dressed in evening clothes. This gave a gala air to our parties. I missed it. Hotel entertaining seemed almost as bleak as the street suit.

I had had a tiny house in Small Town, but a pretty one. There were my wedding presents. I liked to display them. I liked to think up unique center-pieces and menus. When I had acquired something newer and nicer than my friends I liked to display it and receive their praises or suspect their envy. Small-townism? Yes. But I was of Small Town, and choosing the best hotel, ordering the more elaborate menu, did not take the place of the pride of ownership to me. So little personal ability was in it — only the ability to pay, and this seemed to me too obvious a competition.

Another thing — each time we were in-

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vited out we met different people, usually another couple. Now two and two was not a "gathering" as I understood social gatherings. There was no party spirit — no play about it. And the constant meeting of strangers gave me a lonesome feeling. It was as if you were constantly prospecting — trying to establish relationships, fishing for common interests, and all so futile, too, as you never expected to see them again. At home there was a party some place every week, the same crowd again and again. I missed the intimacy of their conversation, and the coziness of their group spirit.

Nor was it any better at the functions to which our rich relations asked us. We went. We knew no one. Met no one.

Now I had grown up a social animal, accustomed to meeting people, knowing people, interested in their affairs, talking about them, to them. I missed this. I was lonesome. I missed intercourse, play of words, giggles, fun. Nor could the shops take the place of friends to me, as they did in the lives of many of the city women. I was accustomed to going down town, buying what I wanted, and home again. I found it tedious to spend hours making the rounds of a dozen stores just as a diversion. I couldn't make looking and looking at clothes I didn't need and couldn't wear take the place of conversation with friends. I soon had "seen all the sights".

The only real pleasure I had was the theater. I went as often as I could afford it. But alas, I soon found that I could not afford to go to "everything good" as I had in Small Town. I felt abused when I had to miss attractions I would once have "gone up to the city" to see, just as I found it hard to ride in street cars when on my visits to the city I always rode in "cabs". I discovered, in fact, that living in a city had robbed me of one of the chief pleasures of the town, namely, of "going up to the city". "Going up to the city" had been a great annual spree. We had done it every year since we were married. We went to the best hotel, ordered party meals, took in all the theaters with supper afterwards, wore our best clothes, rode in carriages, bought our whole season's wardrobes in these few days and so seemed worth while shoppers to the saleswomen who "kotowed" to us, as did the hotel clerk and his minions. For those few days we savored the city of the rich, as we could afford to do for three or four days. Living in the city was a different matter. We then savored the city of the economical.

In three years we returned to Small Town, I a sadder, and, I thought, wiser woman. But to my surprise I found it as difficult to readjust myself to Small Town as it had been to adjust myself to the city. Although I was welcomed by my old friends and was delighted to see them again it was not long before I found myself missing the stimulus of new acquaintances, of conversation with strangers whose opinions I did not know and who did not know mine, of seeing new things, of watching strange people, of a few plays, the newest books, some concerts, visits to picture gallery and stores, even the panorama afforded by the crowds upon the streets. Even though I enjoyed them and loved my friends I found it boring to depend for entertainment on "parties". In fact, I had learned to do without individuals and preferred instead the constant show of the city, its independence, its detachment.

In time, however, I was once more knit into the texture of the small town. The War came on and I found myself on committees, detailed to answer telephones, write publicity, attend meetings, with never a moment nor hardly a spot to call my own.

And then we moved again to the city. And again I was glad. For I was tired of responsibility. I wanted to stop this community work. I wanted the freedom of irresponsibility and the privacy of detachment. And this I thought the city would give me.

I was many years older. I had children. My boy was twelve. He went to public school. When I think of that sojourn in the city two incidents stand out. One day I was walking down the street with the boy. And he suddenly clutched my arm. "See that boy, Mother? What do you think? He is a Sheenie." And his voice took on a tone of contempt.

"And what," I asked, "is a Sheenie?"

"A Sheenie's a Jew, Mother, a Jew."

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And his tone was even more contemptuous.

"And what's so awful about a Jew, Son?"

"Oh, Mother — they're awful — Jews. They're dirty foreigners."

"Is that so? Then how about your friendship for J— N—?" I named a friend of his in Small Town. "How about Mrs. B—?" And I named a friend of mine. "And how about L—?" And I named a girl who visited my daughter.

"But they're not Jews. They're just like us!"

"Exactly," I said. "And so are Sheenies if you know them. At Small Town you happen to *know* individuals. Here you condemn them as names."

On another occasion I was walking down the street with the child — five years old — of a friend of mine. I noticed that as we passed people on the street turned and glared at us. Rather annoyed I walked faster, but the amazed and sometimes antagonistic stares continued. At last I looked down at my companion to see if he could be the cause. And I noticed him hit the next person he passed as hard as ever he could. I watched and he did it to the next and the next. I stopped.

"What's the matter? What do you mean," I asked, "by hitting these people?"

"They push me," he said. "Want them to leave me alone and they won't. Get away," he screamed, as one old woman jostled him. And I understood. He did not know that it was the crowded condition on the sidewalk that made people jostle him. He thought they intended to push him and he classed them all enemies. So often in crowds I've thought of Donald. How instinctive is this desire to hit those who jostle you. A natural reaction of one's personal dignity! Once in a terrific jam in which a young woman made herself the point of a wedge in my back I turned and pinched her. To this day I have this same urge in the subway rush, just as I have the same repugnance to making one of the jam. My city friends explain to me that I cannot "get a seat" otherwise, that distances are so great that I "won't get any place" if I don't push. But the point is that I'd rather stand, I'd rather not "get any place" than lose my dignity doing it. And the fact that city people don't know they lose their dignity, have lost it and forgotten they ever had it, is no answer.

Of course there is this conflict between individuals for place, positions, this competition for rewards — call it what one will — in town as in city. But there is a difference. In the city competition is close, immediate, undisguised, personal, whereas in a small town it is more remote, for social standing, for instance, rather than for a seat in the subway.

I confess I was rather glad when we moved back to our small town again. Glad to find myself once more where my boy knew individuals and not classes, where conflict was disguised, where personal dignity could flourish.

And then once more I moved to a city. I had many friends and they knew one another as well as they knew me. I met them at each other's houses. So I could no longer, as in my newlywed days, accuse the city of substituting sight-seeing for social intercourse — I was not lonely. This time we tasted almost to the full the joys of city life.

Yet I have returned once more to the small town, content. And now my friends ask me why. When I hear that question I always recall one night as I sat in a car at a street crossing waiting for the traffic man to give the signal. It was dismal and damp and hundreds of people scurried this way and that to their street cars, to the L, to the subway, looking like so many swarming ants. They looked so tiny under the shadow of the L — so pitifully inadequate — so terribly many — so herd-like, yet so unrelated and isolated in spirit. As I gazed at them there swept over me a feeling of the aimlessness of human beings, struggling so hard to keep alive that they may struggle to keep alive. A great disgust with life swept over me — mine and theirs — all life. I defy any one to look on such a scene and not lose entirely every scrap of admiration or sympathy for human kind. It offends not only a sense of mere personal dignity but of all human dignity.

It was then, I think, that I decided I preferred to live in a small town.

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Some one has told me that my preference is due to the fact that I like intimate intercourse with people. But I had that in my last sojourn in the city.

Whatever other people may think about a small town, my own preference, I believe, is based on the fact that I like humanity too well to suffer it in the mass. In a town there are people but not too many. There are enough to like and not enough to despise. Perhaps it comes to this: Individuals seem larger on the small town stage than on the large city one. And human beings look more dignified when we see them as individuals — friends and neighbors — than in the mass.

And perhaps, too, as life in a town gives us more opportunity to emphasize our individuality, these opportunities also emphasize dignity, both personal and human. In a town a man lives something as a tree in a grove. By being a tree it makes it a grove. By being a citizen a man makes it a town. He is counted. This emphasizes his ego, gives him a sense of responsibility, of importance. Perhaps the citizen who gives a public park to the city has the same feeling but how few of the million inhabitants can or do make any contribution to the city's life, whereas nearly every townsman does, if only, as I say, by living there.

In a town a man has a sense of permanence. In spite of the apparent substantiality of a city I've never been in one where there was not tearing up of sidewalks, streets and houses as well as building of them. There is some of that in a town but not enough to produce an atmosphere of unrest. In a city people come and go constantly, to and from other places, from neighborhood to neighborhood. In a town there is some of this but not enough to affect the atmosphere. There the majority of people live in their own houses, remain years in the same neighborhoods.

In a town we have elbow room. We see people, talk with them, meet with them, but they do not crowd us for standing room as they do in a city. They do not push us on the streets, swarm on us at crossings. They do not mob us on our way to and from work. If we, occasionally, do find ourselves in a crowd at some town celebration or "when the circus comes to town", it is of our own free will and not unavoidable as part of our daily routine.

In a town we have leisure. We can get to work on time without hurrying, for it is not far, but if we don't we do not lose our jobs. We can get to our engagements without knocking any one down and, if we do not, they will wait. We can get home to dinner without hanging on a strap for twenty or thirty miles and, if we don't, no harm is done.

Now these things: self-importance, permanence, space, leisure make for personal dignity. And seeing people, numbers of them, with a fair amount of importance, permanence, space, and leisure gives to the onlooker an impression of human dignity and a consequent respect for humanity. To have this respect for humanity may not seem an important thing to city people. But to me it does seem important. It makes all the difference between life seeming worth while or not. For my part I want it to seem worth while. And so I prefer to live in the small town.

Those who live in the suburbs or country-club districts while they do business "in the city" are motivated by this same desire to serve their self-respect, to feel responsible, to seek permanence and space. And as a makeshift this serves very well. If I had to work in a city I should reside in the outermost suburb of that city. But suburban life is at best but a makeshift. Instead of yielding leisure it curtails it, for there is that hurry at night to cover the ten or twenty miles between business and home. And so one brings to that home at best an aching self-respect and puts upon that home the burden of easing it, a handicap for any home. One brings home, too, the scars and toughened results of the ten hours' struggle in the city. Nor does one have, to soften it, that sense of responsibility one has in the small town. The suburb does not depend on the suburbanite to the extent a town does on a townsman. The suburbanite may be responsible for its beauty but not for its water supply, or its government, or the picture galleries, or libraries as the townsmen who discuss these things at their lunch hour, who drop work in

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mid-afternoon for a committee meeting about them, are responsible for these things in their towns. The suburbanite is at best an absentee citizen of that suburb.

Nor can the suburbanite count upon his suburb's permanence. Its very proximity to the city is a danger that he can not control. Whether factories or residences move his way, what transportation develops — these have more to do with the future value of his property than any act of his. His investment therefore is at the mercy of interests detached from him. He is only an exploitee. But the townsmen have protection. Their fellow citizens own and control the factories and transportation lines of the town. They meet them and know them. If it is necessary to protect themselves they can invoke public opinion against these fellow citizens — their own, if need be.

The suburbanite does save his self-respect. He makes his children citizens, not parasites. He makes them perennials, not annuals. He holds on to his own individuality — but coming in daily contact with his fellow men in the mass he hardly regards them as individuals. But still, the townsman has advantages over him. For with the townsman there is no need to rescue his self-respect — there is little pressure on it. *His* children are more than citizens; they are makers, owners. They are more than perennials; they are the trees which make the wood. He not only holds on to his own individuality but he recognizes that of others. And, last but not least — for I cannot forget the happy days I've enjoyed in cities — on occasion he can sample the joys of a city as the suburbanite can never do. For what is the small towner's playhouse is the suburbanite's workhouse. To him city theaters mean the last car home, not the supper in a grille that they do to the town visitor stopping at a hotel; to him the shops an economy marathon, not a mammoth shop-window as to the town man's wife; to him the ornate hotel is the caravanserai for strangers, not the "delectable country" that it is to its country-bred guest several days a year.

City life still offers me many attractions. I like to see life a panorama. I like the excitement of the city, the stimulation of something ever new. I like the theaters and the shops. Sometimes I like the detachment of it, the irresponsibility and the bigness of it. But all these I can get when at intervals I visit the city for a few weeks. I can even get them more on visits than when I live among them. But no city person ever gets even for a period the advantages of the town. By living in the city I would lose both town and city; by living in the suburbs of a city I would gain only a few advantages of either and lose some good points of both. By living in the town I gain the best of both. And that is why I prefer to live in the small town.

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RUSSIA'S NEW LITERATURE

By Elias Tobenkin

IN the Russia of the village and of the "dark people", under the Czars, there was no evening. Except for thieves and lovers, the peasant retired with the setting of the sun. He was unlettered; there was no family Bible; news of the world was fifty to seventy-five years old. Both the evening and the printed page were introduced to the broad rural masses of Russia by the revolution.

The Soviet government, rounding out the tenth year of its existence, cannot yet boast that it has taught the Russian mouzhik to raise two grains of wheat where formerly one grew, but it has succeeded in creating a peasant reading public. Blood and terror ushered in the Bolshevist order; the printing press is giving it stability. Whether Slav or Moslem, Mongol, Tartar or Bashkir, the population of Russia has in the past nine years been impregnated with the Soviet printed word. Prior to the revolution the peasant's conversation revolved within a circle of one thousand words. The vocabulary of the Russian peasant to date has increased to some four thousand words.

Since the middle of 1918 there has been no other press in Russia than the Communist press. The art and literature of the country, similarly, has been transferred into new paths.

A whole generation of rough-hewn poets and prose-writers and a new, stark literature, mirroring the vast social and political changes, has arisen in Russia since 1917. Trotsky, analyzing the new writing, summed it up recently as a "literature of the heavy-nailed peasant boot". A more apt characterization would be difficult to find.

The blood of the peasant is in the veins of Russia's post-revolutionary writing. If Russian literature under the old regime was in large measure a literature by noblemen for noblemen, the new writing, in its aim at any rate, is a literature by peasants for peasants. Just as the estate of the landowner, the "nobleman's nest" was the background against which Russian literature was written by Turgenev, Tolstoy, Tchekov, the peasant hut with its perpetual twilight and squalor is the axis about which revolve the novels of Fedor Gladkov and Youri Libedinsky and the short stories of Isaac Babel. It is a literature that without debasing art is trying to simplify and democratize it so that it will reach down to the low cultural level of the Russian masses.

A further glimpse into the far-reaching ideologic and proprietary changes that have taken place in the realm of the printed word in Russia since the revolution is essential to the proper estimate and understanding of this new literature. It explains the new writers, with their new aims, struggles and discontents.

When in the spring of 1917, shortly after the abdication of the Romanovs, Nikolai Lenin arrived in Petrograd from his exile in Switzerland, a tiny four-page paper, *Pravda*, opened its columns to his doctrines. Nine hundred and fifty newspapers — seven hundred in the Russian tongue and two hundred and fifty in the thirty-seven languages spoken by Russia's minority nationalities — today proclaim the Lenin idea of government from one end of the Soviet empire to the other.

There is no opposition press in Russia. Disagreements with certain tenets of the Communist dogma, criticism of certain Bolshevist policies or leaders, are permitted and sometimes even encouraged within the official Soviet press itself. Questioning, however, the soundness of Communism as a theory of government would no more be tolerated by the Kremlin authorities than the questioning of the sun's course by Galileo was tolerated by the ruling powers in the middle ages.

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The state monopoly of the printed word does not end with the control of the country's daily newspapers. The Soviet government exercises complete authority over weekly, monthly and other periodicals — some twelve hundred publications in all. Fifty of the leading book-publishing concerns in the country are government-owned. The chief editors, and others in responsible positions, are either communists or work under Communist supervision. Everything that comes off the printing press in the Soviet Union, whether book or poster, newspaper, almanac or fairy-tale, must have the approval of the government censor before it can be released to the public.

This background of zealotry inherent in the country's political credo is influencing art and letters in Russia no less than journalism. Time may soften these strictures or remove them altogether. For the present, however, they are iron-clad, and impose upon writers and artists in the Soviet Union certain parochial limitations which cannot be overlooked.

Only within the past fifteen months have full length novels dealing with the new political and economic order in Russia begun to appear. For the most part the post-revolutionary literature consists of briefer pieces: short stories, silhouettes, episodes.

The new generation of Russian writers is composed largely of recent "graduates" from the Red Army; from barracks and the trenches. Few are above the age of thirty. They had come to manhood amid shell-fire and hoof-beats. It is not wholly accidental, therefore, that the most famous collection of short stories produced by the new literature thus far should bear the title "Cavalry", or that one of the most talked-of novels of the period should have the name "The Commissaries".

The Soviet press, in order, as it were, to get under the very skin of Russia's population, has enlisted from among its factory workers and the more progressive element of the peasantry 225,000 so-called "peasant-and-workers' correspondents". These correspondents are the "eyes" of the government in the villages, in the factories. If anything is wrong with their local government or factory management they report it to the press. Sometimes publicity alone eliminates the abuse mentioned. Sometimes the Attorney-General, whether of the state or nation, takes a hand in the matter, and prison or even death sentences follow the exposure of malfeasance or corruption by the peasant-workers' correspondents.

In a not dissimilar, though more artistic manner, the events and happenings of the past ten years find most graphic delineation in Russia's new fiction and in her new poetry. There is an unmistakable utilitarianism about Russian art and letters today. Life in the raw, undistilled emotion, untamed instinct, are thrown on the canvas or framed between book-covers with the vague notion that both art and life will somehow be served by such feverish literary and pictorial creation.

The new literature reeks of the smouldering ruins of the revolution and of the counter-attempts against it. The Russia that emerges from the printed page is a Russia of blood trails, of rape and murder, of unburied dead. Russia's stoicism, her proneness to Nihilism, come to the surface here too. The new Nihilism, however, is not the Nihilism of the refined sensitive few immortalized by Turgenev, but mass-Nihilism, the despair and indifference of a helpless mob in the face of approaching death.

The penetrating realism and fine human understanding which characterized the work of Russia's literary masters in the nineteenth century is found in abundance in the new writing, but not their sustained leisurely finish. There is a confused mingling in it of epic and lyrical forms and qualities, a mixture of Homer and the Psalms, which sometimes is sublime and often crude. What the new writing does have in profusion is a Promethean strain, a volume and a gusto such as Russian literature had scarcely ever before known.

Russia's post-revolutionary writers, in the main, fall into two well-defined groups. There are the so-called peasant-and-workers' writers, or the "Proletarian Group". Then there is the group of writers which, for want

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of a more precise designation, is spoken of as the "fellow travelers of the revolution", a phrase covered in Russian with the one word, *poputchiki*.

The members of the Proletarian group occupy a position not unlike that of poet laureates to the Soviet order. They are soldiers of the revolution first and writers afterwards. The art and aspirations of the members of this group have been defined by one of its number, the poet Bezimensky, who sings:

"First a son of the party (Communist) am I,
A rhymester in the second place—"

The dean of this group is Demian Bedny, "first poet of the revolution". Besides Bedny and Bezimensky the more outstanding members of the "Proletarians" are the novelists Alexander Neverov and Youri Libedinsky, and the poets and short story writers V. Alexandrovsky, A. Tarasov-Rodionov, P. Arsky, Y. Berdnikov, A. Vesely, G. Lelevich, M. Gerasimov, Novikov-Priboi, Kirrilov.

The Lenin slogan, unfurled early in the revolution, that art is not and cannot be "neutral" and that the proletariat of Russia "must bring to the front the principle of a party literature" is taken by the writers in this group in all literalness. Their approach to creative writing is definitely partizan. Purely aesthetic literature is anathematized. Poetry of "moods and longing" is disdained. "In what do you believe?" is the question they ask of each writer. Their muse is harnessed to the chariot of the revolution, of Communism.

The writers in the group labelled "fellow travelers" are no less imbued with the pathos of the revolution. There are none among them who are anti-proletarian. They accept the Soviet order without question. But with them the urge — or pressure — for propaganda is less in evidence. They possess a sense of discipline and self-restraint. There are in their midst a number of qualified literary technicians. They do not assume an attitude of contempt toward Russia's past, her literary and artistic heritages, and they deal with the present as they find it. The heroism of the revolution is portrayed alongside of its Babbitry. Communist saint and sinner alike pass in review.

Three names stand out in the poetry of the post-revolutionary period: Sergei Yessenin, Vladimir Mayakovsky and Demian Bedny (Demian the Poor).

Of Bedny as a poet it is difficult to speak in accustomed critical terms. He writes, but he is not "literary". His themes are not deep and there is no flight to his imagination. The schooled, aesthetic reader finds little in Bedny's poetry to attract or to hold him. Yet it is not possible to dismiss either the man or his writing lightly. "About Demian Bedny volumes will be written by posterity," Karl Radek once remarked. The prophecy is coming true.

Since early in the revolution Demian Bedny has been a "poem-a-day" man for the Communist press. He has taken the doctrinaire theories of Lenin and Marx, around which the Russian revolution has been built, and through the medium of his "simple rhymes" has megaphoned them to Russia's ninety thousand peasants. He has created a popular simplified language for the purpose and an imagery which the man behind the plow, the red soldier in his barrack not only understands, but memorizes and recites. Bedny is read by the masses as no other writer has been read.

In conferring upon Demian Bedny the highest military honors within the gift of the Red Army, Leon Trotsky as war minister paid tribute to the man and his writing in the following words:

"Demian Bedny, distinguished artilleryman of the word, is honored by the All Russian Central Executive Committee with this bestowing of the order of the Red Flag."

Until literary criticism finds a classification for poets and poetry of the Bedny type, Trotsky's characterization of Demian Bedny as a "distinguished artilleryman of the word" will stand.

Mayakovsky is a poet about whose literary status critics in Russia are by no means in agreement. He is of the dimension of Walt Whitman, but without the consistency and character of the Camden seer. On the philologic and structural side of poetry Mayakovsky is responsible for many inno-

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vations. He has for years been the leader of a sort of *Sturm und Drang* movement in Russia, which allowed freer play to the poetic image and to poetic expression. He gave poetic citizenship to "street language", which before him was considered debasing to the printed page. He broke with accepted poetic standards and created new forms.

It is with regard to the social quality of Mayakovsky's poetry, however, its relation to the revolution, that Russian critics have not yet achieved clarity. Hatred of the Old Regime made Mayakovsky a trumpeteer of the revolution. He is too much of an individualist to fuse successfully with a social order based wholly on a collectivist outlook. He both "mistrusts and hates the masses", according to the well known critic A. Voronsky. In his verses he is a tribune and an orator. Among people he is both "bored and lonely".

In his thirtieth year (December 28, 1925) Sergei Yessenin died by his own hand. The thousands upon thousands who marched behind his bier were led past the Pushkin monument to symbolize the kinship of Yessenin to the older Russian classic. He is today regarded as the greatest national poet that the new post-revolutionary literature has produced.

Yessenin was born in the province of Riazan in 1895. His parents were poor, but his grandfather, a well-to-do peasant, sent him first to the district school and then to a teachers' institute. He came to Moscow in 1916 and his literary career of slightly less than a decade ran parallel with the revolution.

During the first years of revolutionary stress and struggle Yessenin was not popular. The revolution was made in the cities by factory workers. Yessenin in his verses looked out above the heads of the workers to the peasants. He called himself a Bolshevik and tried to write verses in that vein, but his poetry was almost wholly apolitical. Unlike the writings of Demian Bedny and Mayakovsky, Yessenin's verses did not lend themselves "for the poster and the mass". The proletarian slogans of world revolt and internationalism, brought into Russia from industrial Europe, were completely foreign to Yessenin's experience. From the standpoint of revolutionary propaganda, which was at the moment urgently called for in all writing, he was a total loss.

It was only in the last year of the poet's life and since his death that the full significance of Yessenin has dawned upon Russian literary critics, though his writing is still frowned on by "orthodox" communists. Russian literary criticism today quite generally concedes that Yessenin has brought the peasant to the fore in literature to a much greater degree than any other of the post-revolutionary writers. Peasant Russia with its epic mythology and primitive wisdom was his chief inspiration. In his poems of protest Yessenin frequently runs to chaos and boisterousness, but when he writes about the peasant and the country he visualizes himself as "a pilgrim who sings of God with the evening star".

Yessenin's poetry abounds in Russian saints, in humble peasant shrines and shepherd songs. It is charged to the full with Slavic plaintiveness and fatalism. Humility is one of its distinguishing traits. Yet it is not a general trait. Consistency is not among Yessenin's virtues. His beautifully mystic moods are often quite unexpectedly followed by outbursts of coarseness and turbulence, of sheer animalism that leave the reader aghast. In his moods of disappointment he scourges himself, calls himself a scamp and a hoodlum. Nor does he spare Russia.

The turbulence of Yessenin's life for a time obscured the greatness of his genius. The Moscow saloons and the underworld fraternity, or perhaps more correctly sorority, had known him best. He boasted of his capacity for scandalous exploits and libeled his poor but honest parents by asserting in his verses that the blood of horse-thieves ran in his veins. With his death the clouds that hung over his name lifted and the Russian people today concede to the poet the right to claim, as he did:

> "Russia, my poor subdued mother,
> I am your bard and your defender—"

The new fiction is several years younger than the new poetry. Its beginnings date

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back to 1920 or 1921. So vibrant and kaleidoscopic has life in the Soviet Union been in these half-dozen years that Russia's new prose writers are already beginning to fall into what might be termed an old and a young generation.

The writers and themes which held sway in 1924 and 1925 seem remote, if not actually out of date, in 1927. Thought, emotion, vision have since the revolution increased their velocity in Russia from years to decades. Men and ideas rise quickly; decline is equally rapid. The trite themes of sex, of moral anarchy and loathsomeness, so popular two and three years ago, are no longer so popular. Boris Pilniak, Lydia Seifulina, Marietta Shaginan, who won their spurs with just such themes, are no longer considered in close enough touch with the rapidly shifting scenes of Soviet civilization.

With the very newest prose writers the normal is taking the place of the abnormal as literary material. Man comes to the fore in the new fiction, the individual as distinguished from the mass. The writers are immersing themselves in the lives, problems and sorrows of the average person living under the Soviets. There is courage as well as art and penetration in the works of these newer authors.

Thus Leonid Leonov's novel *Barsuki* ("In Badger Holes") is not only an epic of the new Russia which artistically rises to the level of Russia's pre-war classics, it is a daring book as well. It portrays a peasant uprising against the Soviet government in the early days of the Bolshevist regime — a theme that is none too safe. Yet it is done with honesty and boldness. It sweeps the reader into amazement and respect for the author.

As Leonov has penetrated the soul of the Russian peasant, Fedor Gladkov lays bare the bewilderment of the city worker. His latest novel, "Cement", is a close search into individual problems and individual readjustment to the revolution on the part of the man in the industrial communities of Russia. Gladkov is a less disciplined writer than Leonov. There is, however, a profound narrative sweep to his book and it is counted as the first big psychological novel of the new order. The same feeling for individual problems and suffering, as distinguished from mass pathos, pervades the latest novel of Vsevolod Ivanov, "Chabu", which deals with Russia's semi-primitive Siberian tribes and their reactions to the Soviet order. In this group, too, belongs Konstantin Fedin's "Cities and Years" (*Goroda I Godi*).

The most controversial book of this new realistic prose is a volume of Red Army stories entitled *Konarmia* (Cavalry) by Isaac Babel.

Babel was discovered by Gorky in 1916, who printed several of his early stories, but advised him "to go out into the world". The revolution came just then and Babel became one of its soldiers. For seven years, the years of military communism and terror, he served the Soviet government as a political commissary with troops, as a member of the *Tcheka*, the terrorist organization. He took part in various campaigns and expeditions in every part of Russia. These experiences form the background of Babel's writings.

At first his stories were frowned upon in Soviet quarters. Babel's realism in many instances was far from complimentary to the Red Army. It was said that General Budenny, with whose Cossack army Babel had served, was particularly annoyed at the manner in which the young writer was handling his troops and their commanders. The noted Communist critic, Voronsky, came to Babel's assistance. Voronsky not only cleared Babel from untoward government criticism, he established a niche for him as one of the purest artists on Russia's new literary horizon.

The link which binds the present Soviet literary generation with the literary order that went down with the old regime consists of but two men: Maxim Gorky and V. Veresayev. Both of them have accepted the Soviet government from the first. All, or nearly all other writers in Russia, who attained their fame prior to 1917, either would not or could not accept the Bolshevist revolution and went into exile, where some have died, while others are dragging on a lonely and sterile existence.

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THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

By Henry Albert Phillips

IN the light of our own American "Direct from Maker to Reader" experiment in the selection, publication and distribution of books, the experience and phenomenal success of the German book-guilds are bound to be both illuminating and interesting.

There are several book-guilds in Germany. They are all conducted and operated on a plan and basis similar to the "Volksverband der Bücherfreunde, Wegweiser-Verlag G. m. b. H.", of Berlin whose offices and plant I have visited and where I have been courteously shown all the minute workings of the great machine that is now serving more than a half-million regular subscribers annually with several millions copies of books of their own choice.

Herr Otto Gysac, active head of the "People's Society of Book Friends", conducted me about the building, and showed me all the exhibits of the "battles of the books" between the Society of Book Friends and the booksellers, including the voluminous peace treaty.

"Let me make it clear," said Herr Gysac, "that German book publishers have throughout been our fast friends, while for the first few years of our existence, the booksellers — especially the Börsenverein der Deutschen Buchhändler — were our bitter and predatory enemies. In 1925, the booksellers began their greatest campaign against us, not only boycotting us but also all of our co-partners, including the authors who had appeared in our lists."

The same year, it seems, was also the culminating year for the various law-suits that were launched both by and against the Society of Book Friends, in which the central organization of booksellers was joined by smaller organizations throughout the provinces. It was like a final mass attack, using both picked shock troops and heavy artillery. In every instance the opponents of the Society of Book Friends lost their case.

The book peace-treaty, boiled down, is as follows:

I. The Booksellers declare that none of their allegations against the Society of Book Friends can be proved.

II. The Society of Book Friends reiterate that they are not enemies of the Booksellers and proceed to prove that they are a precious link between book production and the reading public.

III. And finally, the two in unison declare that they want to work for the common good and side by side. Amen!

"The Society of Book Friends," resumed Herr Gysac, "was started in 1919 with one hundred members. Four years later we had enrolled one hundred thousand members. At the present moment we have six hundred thousand members registered on our books. Each subscriber becomes a participating member and draws dividends in a reduced price.

"Membership in the society involves absolutely no risk or responsibility further than the annual signing of a promise to accept and pay for the chosen books when they shall be delivered. The obligation is for the four books included in the standard yearly series which the society issues but the member may choose books of an equal monetary value from the fifty or more others that the society publishes during the year, at no extra expense. Of course we try to discourage this practice, and must refuse to do it if given members make the request repeatedly."

"But members pay something in advance, surely?" I ventured. "What assurance have you that membership will continue, or that potential subscribers will become active members?"

"We began with self-assurance and a belief that the reading public would share our idea and its responsibilities — it is really a co-operative society. The proof of

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the value of our idea lies in the rapidly increasing membership. We ask but a single recommendation, a co-signer who is already a member, with each request for membership. We find that present members are our recruiting body and are constantly bringing us new ones. A book is given as a bonus for each new member."

"What is the actual price of the society's books to members, and is this price substantially cheaper than that asked for similar works bought elsewhere?"

"Members pay three marks ten pfennigs, about seventy-five cents, for each of the yearly series books. As to value, you may judge for yourself."

Herr Gysac spread out at random a score of books before me.

"Each book is bound in what is known in the trade as 'half calf'. A large percentage of them are illustrated. The paper is non-cellulose and the text is printed on a flat press. I am understating the case when I say that the books are sold at a third less than the same volumes under the indirect sales methods. We are able to maintain these prices because our apparatus — plant, sales-promotion and distribution — is quite centralized and all business is carried on directly between maker and consumer. There is no middle-man. Furthermore, our enormous production naturally reduces costs all along the line. Mr. Ford has taught us all something. In fact, we pride ourselves in operating an American type of business on the American plan before America has discovered its virtues."

I was especially interested in the author's relations with these great guilds. Herr Gysac was very eager to reassure me that their contracts with their authors offered advantages as great as those with the best publishers under the "old system".

"Authors are offered practically the same terms and royalties as with other publishers. They receive 12½ to 15 per cent on all linen-bound books, which means on all our books, since we do not — as yet, at least — publish any paper-bound books. Our editions other than the series are printed in lots of from 5,000 to 20,000 copies. The 12½ to 15 per cent applies to these extra series only."

"And what about the regular series?" I asked. Authors are always discussing how easy it would be to make fabulous sums through being fortunate enough to appear on the list of a successful book-guild's best sellers. A hundred thousand to a half-million sales assured before the manuscript was on the press! At 15 per cent — well, it was the struggling author's dream come true.

"A differentiation is made in the case of our series books," returned Herr Gysac, pursing his lips, as he has done no doubt on more than one occasion when enlightening expectant authors. "I mean the same differentiation as we make to our members is made to our authors in a reverse ratio. The author's royalty is limited to from 10,000 to 15,000 marks ($2,500 to $3,750 approximately), regardless of the size of the printings, during a single year. When this yearly printing has been exhausted, then we enter upon a new agreement on the same basis as we make on other books. We feel that the enormous editions demanded of the series is a thing quite apart from an author's popularity and a concrete result of the great publishing machine we have built. However, the author benefits substantially and continuously, as our series when exhausted becomes part of the Society's 'Library', the works of which are being sold in increasing numbers to new members.

"Thus far we have published but two books by American authors. The first was 'Main Street', by Sinclair Lewis. We were the first German house to publish Lewis, by the way. Now we have 'So Big', by Edna Ferber, ready for publication. We hope to increase our American selections as time goes on. Our intention — at least for our primary series of four books — is to give first publication to the best German literature.

"That brings us to most important considerations that have sprung from the initial scheme. We have become publishers in every sense of the word. Only this year have we made an arrangement with the recently established Weltgeist Bücher Company, whereby we have increased our annual output of titles to perhaps two hundred. Our output, however, is both

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guided and guarded by the flexibility of the demand and the purchasing power of our subscribers. The Weltgeist Bücher Company is devoted, for the most part, to bringing out cheap, short reprints of famous examples of all phases of world literature. These appear in volumes containing one or more 'numbers'. Single numbers bound in cloth cost 65 pfennigs (16 cents) each. Often several numbers, never more than five, appear in one volume, in which case it sells for two marks and sixty pfennigs. These books are offered to booksellers at 33 per cent off."

I asked how it was possible to gauge the specific desires of such an enormous number of customers who were allowed so much leeway in the choice of books.

"We have solved that problem by sending to each member quarterly — several months in advance of the appearance of the books themselves — a little magazine containing a complete list of the forthcoming books, a description, and, in special instances, chapters, excerpts and illustrations from the books. Thus the member knows exactly what he is buying and makes his choice long enough in advance to facilitate our work of gauging the approximate number of copies necessary.

"If the book chosen costs more than the three marks ten, the member may pay the difference. If the member should choose one of the small books costing only 65 pfennigs, he is asked to take others to the full amount.

"Many booksellers are now members of the society. We have no objection to their selling our subscription-works so long as they adhere to and abide by our rule which permits each member to subscribe for and receive any number up to ten copies of each title.

"We have inaugurated quite a new venture — a department of prints. In connection with this we are putting on the market many bound works of graphic arts and collections of signed etchings, woodcuts and engravings. Furthermore, we have just published a modern fac-simile copy of the Lucas Cranach Bible with colored illustrations and 'The Poem of the Niebelungen'. These are all offered to our members at a substantially reduced price. Consequently, we have a ready-made and enormous group of customers."

It was just twelve o'clock and Herr Gysac invited me to make a tour of the three large seven-story buildings that comprise the plant and offices. A plot of ground adjoining, nearly an acre, is being made ready to house further extensions of the Society of Book Friends.

We walked through a mile or more of busy floors, where most of the labor-saving machines were American. There were tons of fine leather being cut and shaved to provide backs and corners for books. Great machines cutting and counting sheets. Machines for pasting, binding and sewing; still others for pressing out the gold leaf and titling books.

Finally, we visited the dining-halls where the four hundred and fifty employees have a three-course dinner at cost price, about 16 cents. The co-operative idea is carried out in every step of the making of the books, as well as in the marketing of them. Finally, the society has just built a great summer club house on the shores of a lake where the employees from the great Berlin general offices, as well as those from the branch offices at Hamburg and elsewhere, go for their vacation periods in summer.

The German book-guilds are more than merely successful and they have come to stay. They hope to increase their membership to a million by the end of 1928.

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Mr. Carl Van Vechten Discovers A Little Book Called "Uncle Tom's Cabin".
By Gene Markey.

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MAIN STREET WANTS TO KNOW

By Frank Parker Stockbridge

NINE years ago I sat at luncheon with the distinguished director of one of the largest of America's public libraries; and the theme of our discussion was a new book by Arnold Bennett entitled "The Pretty Lady". My host was vehement and polysyllabic in his denunciation of the author, his publishers on both sides of the water, the booksellers who handled the work and, especially, of the library patrons who, innocently or otherwise, asked for "The Pretty Lady" at the call desk. "Pornographic" and "subversive" were among the mildest of the epithets he used; *his* library could die of dry-rot and he himself perish miserably of stagnation before he would become a party to the circulation of such a prostitution of literary talent as that of which Arnold Bennett had been guilty.

A few days ago I received from this same distinguished librarian his monthly report of books most in demand at his library. At the head of the fiction list was "A Good Woman" and at the top of the general list, "Trader Horn"!

Times change; and librarians change with them. Dozens, hundreds of books to which no public library would have given shelf-room at the time of the Armistice are among those most eagerly sought by the book-borrowers and most widely circulated by the libraries. Not all of these would have been banned by the librarians of nine years ago because of the frankness with which they discuss sex problems; that is only one of the phases of the difference in the public's reading tastes then and now. Many titles which no library — hard up for funds with which to buy new books, as libraries always are — would have purchased nine years ago, would have been omitted because of the belief that nobody would want to read them; and that would have been true enough.

For the outstanding phenomenon of our times is the revolution in the reading taste of the general public, coupled with the enormous increase in the number of book-readers; a phenomenon which is nowhere reflected so sharply as in a comparison of the books everybody was reading nine years ago and those which everybody is reading now. And nowhere is such a comparison so easily made as by contrasting the list of the six books most popular among library patrons in November, 1919, with the list of those most in demand at the circulation desks today.

In November, 1919, this is what people were reading:

Fiction

The Amazing Interlude
The Rough Road
A Daughter of the Land
Joan and Peter
Greatheart
Dere Mable

General

A Minstrel in France
Our Four Years in Germany
Out to Win
The Kaiser as I Know Him
Private Peat
Over the Top

In the month of November, 1927, they were reading these by preference:

Fiction

A Good Woman
God and the Groceryman
The Grandmothers
Death Comes to the Archbishop
Lost Ecstasy
Barberry Bush

General

Trader Horn
Mother India
The Royal Road to Romance
The Glorious Adventure
We
Napoleon

I think that the comparison of these two lists proves my contention that there has

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been a literary revolution. It has not come about suddenly nor without ample advance warning; revolutions are, after all, merely climaxes in the progress of evolution. It was clear enough to anybody intelligently studying those first reports from librarians for *The Bookman's Monthly Score* that the then current taste in reading matter was due to change; but there was little, if anything, on which to predicate a forecast of the direction and extent of that change. To study the changes from month to month for some more than a hundred months, and to attempt to interpret them in the light of the other phases of the general revolution which has made this world such a different place in so many respects from what it was then, has been the most fascinating occupation in which I have ever engaged.

The Armistice had barely been signed when Mr. George H. Doran, who had recently taken over THE BOOKMAN, conceived the idea that a far better index of the public's taste in reading than the old list, original with THE BOOKMAN, of "Six Best Sellers" would be a similar list based upon the books most in demand in the public libraries of the United States. His conception was based upon the sound premise that such a report from the libraries would be entirely free from bias. It would indicate only such books as the reading public voluntarily sought for its own entertainment or instruction, whereas there were grave suspicions that the "Six Best Sellers" list often represented books which venal publishers bribed equally venal booksellers to report as "best sellers" whether they were or not, or which the booksellers themselves reported in the hope of moving some of the "plugs" on their shelves. Moreover, a library list would cover more territory and cover it more intensively; for while there were then but about three hundred bookstores in the country, of which only a small fraction reported, there were more than three thousand public libraries, many of them furnishing, then as now, the only means whereby the inhabitants of considerable communities, even of whole states, could keep up with current literature.

In furtherance of his idea Mr. Doran asked the officers of the American Library Association for their co-operation. I was at the moment tying up the loose ends of the last great war campaign for funds wherewith to provide books for our soldiers, in camp and field, the public promotion of which had been one of my contributions to the events which led to the Armistice. The plan met the approval of the Library Association, which, however, declined to shoulder either the work or the responsibility. I seemed to be the only eligible factotum; if I could get the libraries to make the necessary monthly reports the Association had no objection to my trying it on. And so, after talking it over with Mr. Doran, *The Bookman's Monthly Score of Books in Demand at Public Libraries* was started with the publication, in the issue of January, 1919, of the reports made to me by librarians in the preceding November.

Official co-operation of the American Library Association was withdrawn in 1923, shortly after the inauguration of the present practice of introducing the *Score* with my personal interpretation or comment. Some of the conservative leaders of the Association feared that the organization might be held responsible for my own distinctly non-conservative utterances. But none of the hundreds of librarians whose individual co-operation had built up the *Monthly Score* into a national and accurate reflection of current popular taste in books has ever withdrawn that co-operation.

In the beginning the *Monthly Score* was an index of sectional, rather than national reading habits. Book distribution was imperfect; it took weeks or months for the South and the Far West to get the books which New York and New England had already read and discarded. Today every corner of the United States gets its new books at the same time and for the first time in history the nation's reading habits are standardized; everybody is reading the same thing at the same time. This improvement in book distribution is one of the things which accounts for the undeniable fact that there are more readers of books today in the United States than there have ever been anywhere, at any time, since Gutenberg set

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up his press at Mainz. That alone does not, of course, account for the acquisition of the reading habit by an immensely higher percentage of the whole population than was the case a few years ago. Credit (or blame) compulsory education, which is so recent an innovation that its fruits are just beginning to show, the movies, the popular pictorial press or what you will; the fact remains that there are more readers in America today than there have ever been, and that the books they are reading indicate an interest in many things which did not appeal to the popular taste before the War.

I have indicated one of the noticeable differences between the popular literature of nine years ago and that of today. But the present frank interest in the philosophy of sex is only one manifestation of an intense, widespread interest in all the facts of life, spiritual as well as physical; an interest which is clearly reflected in the reading public's choice of books. And this new interest can, I believe, be attributed in the main, if not wholly, to the War and its disillusionments. If a single phrase could characterize all the widely-read books which have been published since the Armistice, I should term them the literature of disillusion.

Certainly the War threw most of the old illusions into limbo. The old codes had failed us in our time of need. The ancient standards had proved inadequate. I cannot conceive of a really thoughtful person who did not come out of the war period feeling as if all of his mental and spiritual props had been kicked out from under him. A few of us were able to give expression to that feeling, in divers ways; a vast number unable to formulate their reactions, not even conscious of their source, joined in the re-examination of the old codes and standards, putting them to the test, frankly discarding many of them and seeking for more light whereby to refurbish the remainder or erect new and more workable ones in their place. For human nature must have its standards, however illusory; and the trend of popular literature during the past nine years has been not merely iconoclastic but constructive in its tendency to build up a new set of illusions to take the place of the old, forgotten ones.

The name of the new illusion is the same as that of the old — Reality. Having discovered that the old realities were unreal, we are now eagerly seizing upon every new rearrangement of the old facts, every restatement of the ancient verities, in the half-conscious effort to build up for ourselves a new Reality which shall serve us, until another catastrophe shatters it, as a working philosophy of life.

I think no other conclusion can be drawn from an examination of the month-to-month records of what people have been reading since the end of the War. This is more clearly reflected, naturally, in the list of general books than in the fiction lists. A good story is a good story, and people will always read good stories; it is not to fiction that most of us look for guidance. Yet even the post-war fiction reflects quite definitely, in large measure, the precise trend which I have pointed out.

Look again at that list of general books which were the most popular on the day the Armistice was signed. War books, all of them, but all either utterly romantic and unreal, or propagandists of hate and equally unreal. But with the ending of the war a book appeared which nobody, not even its publishers, dared to hope would have any considerable circulation, but which leaped instantly into the highest public favor because, as I see it, it was in essence a searching examination and condemnation of precisely the things which war propaganda had attempted to compel us to venerate, if not to adore. "The Education of Henry Adams" was the forerunner of a long list of books which, one by one, with varying degrees of violence, tore down our old standards, often without offering new ones to replace them.

For eighteen months from the beginning of 1919 "The Education of Henry Adams" was the most popular book in America, with the possible exception of "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse", itself another and different chapter in the literature of disillusion. Books which offered temporary escape from the terrors of a world without illusions, which had their vogue during this period, were such trivialities, on the one hand, as "The Young Visiters", and such

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gropings after new illusions as Sir Oliver Lodge's "Raymond" and Conan Doyle's "The New Revelation". I am purposely omitting special reference to the light fiction of Zane Grey, Harold Bell Wright, Ethel M. Dell, E. Phillips Oppenheim, James Oliver Curwood, Peter B. Kyne and the like, as of no great significance in either period.

Along in the middle of 1920 John Maynard Keynes struck another smashing blow at our illusions, with "The Economic Consequences of the Peace". This was closely followed by Philip Gibbs's "Now It Can Be Told". It was becoming the fashion to "tell all", and the public demanded that all the lies they had been told, not only about the war but about everything else in life, be shown up for the falsehoods they were. So while the romance-seekers were still lulling their senses with Frederic O'Brien in "White Shadows in the South Seas" four new books, appearing almost simultaneously at the beginning of 1921, brought new revelations and began to point to harassed millions some glimpses of the way out.

No book among all those which have thus far been listed in the *Monthly Score* has had such an enormous vogue as Wells's "Outline of History". From the beginning of 1921 to the end of 1922 it led all other titles in popularity in all sections of the country; it was not, indeed, until near the end of 1924 that librarians ceased to report it as still being in sufficient demand to give it a regular place in the national reports. And Wells, the iconoclast, made it clear to millions who had never thought about it before that all peoples, in all times, had lived upon illusions just as we had been living, and illusions founded upon bunk no less than ours were. Simultaneously Mrs. Wharton in "The Age of Innocence" brought home the realization that the structure of "Society" had never rested upon any more substantial foundations, even in the 'seventies, than it does now, a realization heightened by the revelations of Margot Asquith's "Autobiography".

What was there left which one could respect? Not the social order, not "Society" or its personnel, not political blunderers calling themselves statesmen. Along came Edward Bok with part of the answer. Business — business and oneself. "The Americanization of Edward Bok" gave a picture of a young man who had won his way to the pinnacle of business success through reliance upon nothing but his own energy and character, and for nearly four years this book held a place in popular favor second only to that of the Wells "History". While the dull horrors of life in a small town to a neurotic "intellectual" were being graphically depicted by Sinclair Lewis in "Main Street", readers were beginning to reveal a growing interest in the idea of relying upon themselves instead of upon the social group. They began to read and soon were reading avidly that tale of a self-respecting man, "If Winter Comes", and were seeking aid in developing their own self-control and self-respect through such books as "Outwitting Our Nerves" and, at the turn of the year from 1922 to 1923, Emile Coué's "Self Mastery Through Conscious Auto-Suggestion".

The building-up process had begun. Confirmation of the now general belief that the affairs of the world had been dreadfully bungled and that it was up to each individual to act for himself, as a unit rather than as merely one of the mass, was furnished in "Three Soldiers", "The Mind in the Making" and by "The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page". And from then on the trend toward self-development in both inward and outward aspects, the eager desire to find out the fundamental facts of life and living, is so clearly reflected in the record of the books that even the most cursory glance at the list of titles from early 1923 to now is sufficient to show it.

Emily Post's "Etiquette" which, with half a dozen others on the same theme, had immense popularity for nearly three years, is one of these manifestations; another is the vogue of "Black Oxen". And in the middle of 1923 a new note, which is still echoing, was sounded with the appearance and general acceptance of Papini's "Life of Christ". With everything else in human affairs up for re-examination, religion was not exempt. The Bible needed re-statement for a new generation, and the public turned from Papini's "Life" only when Bruce Barton

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came forward with "The Man Nobody Knows" and "The Book Nobody Knows", both of them still among the first dozen in rank of popularity, along with "The Christ of the Indian Road".

"The New Decalogue of Science", and "The Fruit of the Family Tree" at once stimulated and gratified the desire to get at the roots of life, at the same time that "The Plastic Age" and "The Green Hat" were whetting or vicariously satisfying a desire of quite a different order. "Babbitt" had had its place on the pinnacle of popularity for a few months in 1923. "So Big" held that coveted place for several months until displaced by "The Little French Girl" in 1925, to be succeeded by "Arrowsmith" and so on down through "The Constant Nymph", "The Private Life of Helen of Troy" and "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" to "An American Tragedy", second through most of 1927 among popular fiction only to "Elmer Gantry".

Still reviewing the past while trying to build a more satisfactory future for ourselves, we gave a warm reception to "Our Times" and "The Mauve Decade", and welcomed "The Revolt of Modern Youth" as reflecting much of our own state of mind, while seeking further guidance from such books as "This Believing World", "The Travel Diary of a Philosopher", "Why We Behave Like Human Beings", "The Royal Road to Romance" — we still pursue illusion — and "The Story of Philosophy", which for several months was by all odds the most popular book of its time, either fiction or general, which has been reported by the libraries since the *Monthly Score* was begun.

If there be any significance whatever in the books which great numbers of people read with enthusiasm, certainly this survey of the progress of the books for the past nine years signifies that we are building a new outlook on life, a new code of behavior and morals based not upon the old traditions but upon a new interpretation of the old truths. We are stripping away the shams and falsehoods from even the most sacrosanct personages of the past, disclosing them as human beings like ourselves, and reading biographies, not only in this new manner but the always more or less false autobiographies, as we never read them before. If I were a publisher looking for something to publish, I would get hold of a well-written and revealing biography, no matter whose, for a "sure-fire hit".

Lytton Strachey began this present vogue of biography, with his "Queen Victoria". In "The Mirrors of Downing Street", and "Damaged Souls", in "Ariel: The Life of Shelley" and Miss Lowell's "John Keats", in the "George Washington" of Rupert Hughes and of W. E. Woodward, in William Allen White's "Woodrow Wilson", in John Drinkwater's "Lincoln" and Carl Sandburg's "The Prairie Years", as well as in E. Barrington's only slightly fictionized lives of Lady Hamilton and of Lord Byron we have got new and more human pictures of these personages of history, as we have of Napoleon in Emil Ludwig's currently popular life of the Corsican. And in the field of autobiography "Roosevelt's Letters to His Children", Colonel House's "Intimate Papers", Professor Pupin's "From Immigrant to Inventor" and Kate Douglas Wiggin's "My Garden of Memory" are foremost among those which have caught the public fancy in these nine years.

I have noted in passing the works of fiction which seemed to have a bearing upon my general thesis or which during the period under consideration achieved the first place in popularity for any considerable stretch of time. It would be unfair not to note those others which have gained an important place in the *Monthly Score* in the same period. Such a list would include Booth Tarkington's "Alice Adams", "Gentle Julia", "The Midlander" and "The Plutocrat"; Conrad's "Arrow of Gold" and "The Rescue"; Mrs. Wharton's "Glimpses of the Moon", "Old New York" and "The Mother's Recompense"; Mrs. Rinehart's "Dangerous Days" and "The Breaking Point"; Mrs. Atherton's "The Sisters-in-Law"; Charles Norris's "Brass" and "Bread"; Kathleen Norris's "Certain People of Importance"; Dorothy Canfield Fisher's "The Brimming Cup"; Willa Cather's "A Lost Lady"; Scott Fitzgerald's "This Side of Paradise" and "The Beautiful and Damned"; Joseph

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Hergesheimer's "Cytherea" and "The Bright Shawl"; Floyd Dell's "Moon Calf"; Joseph Lincoln's "Shavings"; Knut Hamsun's "The Growth of the Soil"; Carl Van Vechten's "Tattooed Countess"; Raphael Sabatini's "Fortune's Fool" and John Galsworthy's "White Monkey".

But all of those are by the way. Most of them would have been as warmly welcomed nine years ago. They have no especial bearing one way or another, upon my contention that there is not only a possible but a certain way to read the soul of a nation, and that is by the study of the progressive changes in the national taste in books.

REHEARSAL

By Arthur Kober

("Credit, too, should be given to the ladies of the chorus who performed with grace, ease, charm and celerity."—Newspaper notice.)

"ALL right, girls. Line up. Come on, for the love of mud, can the Western Union messenger speed and get in line. Ready? All right, Eddie, give us the introduction. Now watch it, girls, watch it! Ready now. La, da, de, da, da, da, da. All right now. Remember, — right foot forward. Let's go! One-and-two-and-three-and-four. One-and-two-and-three-and-four. Now turn. Turn! For cripes sakes when I say turn I don't mean wiggle your fannies a quarter of an inch. I mean TURN!

"All right, Eddie, let's have that over again. Never mind the introduction. Just play a coupla bars and we'll start right in. Ready now, girls, and for the love of God put something in those steps besides a glassy stare. Ready now. La, da, de, da, da, da, da. One-and-two-and-three-and-four. That's it. Now turn. Now to the left. To the right. All right. Watch your line! Watch your line on the end there. All right. Now again. One-and-two-and-three-and-four and position. Position! Geez cripes, how the hell did you get there — you with "Goldie" on the bathing suit? How the hell did you get in that position? Geez, we've been rehearsing this lousy step a whole week and I can't get the damn thing through those thick domes. Geez, you dames don't want to get your hair waved — you want to get your heads waved! Hey, you, what's that crack?

"Wait a minute, Eddie. I'll take a line at a time. The first line. Come on there, Frenchie, you're in the first line. Get in place, get in place! Don't argue, baby, just attend to your business. Now you other dumb wenches — watch this and learn. God knows you should have known this step by this time. Geez, what do you use for brains? Shut up, you, — I didn't ask you that question.

"All right, Eddie, let's have it. One-and-two-and-three-and-four. That's it. Turn. With the toe, dumb-bell, with the toe! Not with the heel, — WITH THE TOE!

"Now the second line girls. All right, Eddie, play it. All right, girls. Set. La, da, de, da, da, da, da. Shake it, for God's sake, shake it. What the hell do you think this is, a prayer meeting? Put something in that step. That's it. That's it.

"All right, the third line. Excuse me for waking you up, you with the hair. Get in line before you have a relapse. Ready, Eddie. Let's go. Get hot! HOT, I said! That's fine.

"Now everybody, from the beginning with the introduction, straight through. And for God's sakes let's get it straight. Hit it, Eddie. Now right into it, girls. Put some life into it. Fine. That's it. That's it. Now sway. Sway, for cripes sakes, SWAY! That's it. Oh, my God! Wait, Eddie, wait. Geez, did you ever see anything so terrible? Why the hell did they wish this flock of dumbbells on me? That was terrible. That was lousy. Rest, REST! You got me all tired out. Rest."

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TIME OUT!

By Robert Benchley

THE seeker after entertainment has had a pretty thin time of it this month. While there has been a feverish show of activity in the mime-marts the net result has been perhaps one thrill and three laughs. The thrill was at Miss Helen Hayes's performance in "Coquette" and one of the laughs can never be captured again, for it was furnished between the halves of the Yale-Harvard game and the comedian was shrouded in anonymity and a large coon-skin coat. Futile as it will be for you to try to get this laugh for yourself, I want to place it on the records and you might as well read about it while you have the magazine open at this page.

This sterling individual performance was given by a young man who is probably famous by now among his Yale admirers, but whose name is, as yet, unknown to us commentators. I do not expect him to remain long unknown, however, for he has the soul of a great comedian. For five minutes he made fifty-five thousand people laugh and, what is more, his comedy was extemporaneous, the result of a divine afflatus which propelled him down the center of Soldiers' Field in a perfect frenzy of unconscious exhibitionism, without which no really great comedy can be produced.

His act was apparently the result of some slight preparation with a comrade beforehand with a view to disrupting the morale of the Harvard band. It was a beautiful thing to disrupt, for the musicians had marched in solid phalanx down the center of the field and were standing in front of the Yale cheering section in that utterly gratuitous gesture of sportsmanship which leads one rival to spell out the name of the other when the word they would like, in their hearts, to spell out would result in their dismissal, *en masse*, from college.

The two young men, sensing the falsity of the sentiment, evidently decided to show their contempt by running helter-skelter through the Harvard formation. This they proceeded to do, but the effect was not quite as devastating as they had hoped. The situation called for larger and more heroic manoeuvers. And of the two original iconoclasts, only one had the imagination to carry on. His comrade either was crushed by the failure of the original campaign or was yanked off the field by well-wishers. At any rate, he left the scene and vanished into oblivion.

It now remained for the solitary crusader in the coon-skin coat to defy the gods of sportsmanship and rhythm, and, as a personification of these forces, he picked on the highly efficient and dignified drum-major of the Harvard band. The word "Y-A-L-E" having been spelled out to the satisfaction of the Yale stands and all codes of football ethics, the musicians swung into marching formation again and proceeded in a symmetrical parade around the field, led by the band-master with a twirling baton and that majestic *sang-froid* which only a Harvard drum-major can muster. But beside him, at the head of the phalanx, ran the coon-skin coat with a pair of twinkling feet showing underneath and a small head, surmounted by a strange Civil War fatigue-cap, bobbing up and down from out the collar.

As he loped along he chatted with the drum-major in a friendly way, seeming oblivious of the danger he was running of being hit by the twirling baton. What he said, only he and the drum-major know, but it was obviously the conversation of a highly interested spectator, avid to learn the mysteries of twirling a baton. (And, for the Harvard drum-major it must be said that he conducted himself magnificently under more trying circumstances than have probably ever before confronted a drum-major.) His remarks may have ranged from "Hey, let me twirl it a minute, will you, mister?" to

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"So you think you're smart, do you? Well, let's see you twirl it the other way!" Whatever they were they had no effect on the Harvard indifference.

The band was now in front of the Harvard stands, where it stopped to play tunes of the old days when Harvard swept across last white lines at will and the sons of Eli were shown that Harvard still held sway. But the coon-skin coat knew of no such days. To him Harvard was a figure of fun, a toy to be played with an hour and then cast aside. So he led the Harvard stands in their singing — much to the delight of the Harvard stands.

Now and again someone from the side-lines would draw him into conversation and try to point out to him that where he really belonged was on the other side of the field. And, with the slyness of a fox, he would apparently allow himself to be convinced. At such moments he would start on a rhythmic lope back across the gridiron, leading the drum-major to believe that the torture was over. But half-way he would pause, with perfect timing, and cup his ear as if the strains of the Crimson music were calling him back. Then, overcome with the grandeur of it all, he tore back to his old position at the head of the band beside the drum-major, and threw himself into the direction of the brasses with such fervor that at times he seemed to be just a mass of whirring fur.

It was not until the music had stopped that he allowed himself to be escorted honorably around the running-track, back to his mates and the blue wall of Yale banners, where he was received with huzzas and if there is any justice in this world, by a large "Y" to wear on his sweater for the rest of his life. His hold on his public may be estimated by the fact that when a little later during the game he fell spectacularly on a ball which had rolled out of bounds and was escorted out of the enclosure by three Cambridge policemen, such a storm of protest and boo-ing arose from the stands on both sides of the field as has never been heard in those dignified precincts before.

This may sound like merely the prank of an exuberant and somewhat offensive college-boy, but mixed in it somewhere was a grand and noble defiance coupled with a comic sense and a feeling for tempo and pantomime which marked it as the outstanding theatrical performance of the month.

Within the comparatively restricted walls of the theater and in more formal surroundings Miss Helen Hayes must receive the palm for practically perfect acting, not only in this month but in many months. Her performance as the little Southern coquette who, treading the path of innocent dalliance with a light heart and gay deceptions, found her feet on the crumbling brink of tragedy, is something to come in from the outlying districts to see.

The play "Coquette" itself, whether it derives prestige or not from a perfect cast, is, in its own right, an honest and highly effective piece of playwriting, especially in those parts toward the end where the oncoming tragedy is warded off, even up to the last, by little flashes of futile comedy, so minor in their note that they too become an integral part of the tragedy, as in the last act of "The Wild Duck". One of the three laughs mentioned at the beginning of this article came in "Coquette" just before the end, when young Andrew Lawlor, Jr., as the kid brother of the unfortunate Miss Hayes, prepares for a good hour of concentration on Latin verbs by putting on a phonograph record before curling up in a chair with his text-book. Whether this touch came from George Abbott who, with Jed Harris, was responsible for the same minute perfection of performance which marks their other work "Broadway", or from Ann Preston Bridgers, who, with George Abbott again, is responsible for the play itself, this single bit of business is a masterpiece of realism on somebody's part.

If you were to judge from the foregoing remarks that "Coquette" is about the only really remarkable dramatic event of the month up to the closing date of this magazine you wouldn't be far from wrong. But it is so genuinely remarkable that nothing else is needed.

There have been, of course, several all-around satisfactory entertainments, such as the crook-and-cop melodrama "Nightstick", the pleasantly inconsequential "And

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So To Bed" (being a continuation of Mr. Pepys's amorous sallies after the closing of his diary, with Wallace Eddinger as the susceptible Samuel himself), the Theater Guild's production of Shaw's wordy but good-wordy "The Doctor's Dilemma" and several other good ones which naturally closed quickly, such as Philip Barry's "John". But, in general, the legitimate field has been marked by a steady flow of mediocrity during the late Fall, which distinguishes it from the early Fall, late Summer and early Spring by perhaps the fraction of an inch.

For the gay ones who like to sit and tap their feet in the theater and look on the lighter side of sex to the exclusion of its tragedies, there are such elaborate harlequinades as "The Five O'Clock Girl" and "Artists and Models". "The Five O'Clock Girl" has a couple of very nice song numbers ("Up In The Clouds" and "Thinking of You"), with Oscar Shaw and Mary Eaton (the latter having secretly evolved a personality during the past year through home-study). While it is nothing that will haunt your memory when you are an old man, it will do very nicely for one evening while you are young. "Artists and Models", as the name suggests, is to be found at the Winter Garden under the double-eagled banner of the Messrs. Shubert. It is much what you might expect under these conditions, only better. Florence Moore has more suitable material than she has had for several seasons, and the baffled Jack Pearl is again completely at sea in the face of life's complexities, a state of mind which always recalls his line in another show when, torn almost beyond belief by the intricacies of the English language and the stupidity of his companion, he raised his hands to Heaven and cried; "If I live tonight, I live forever!" There is also Ted Lewis, if such is your fancy.

Along with a slump in business in the theatrical district has come the worst early season that the night-clubs have had since the public first started throwing its money away. Proprietors who, for several seasons, have stood smugly by and listened to the cover-charges drop merrily into the little china-dog on the mantel are now surveying rows of empty tables and wondering if perhaps people have more sense than they gave them credit for. There are one or two clubs, among them Helen Morgan's, which have that invaluable prestige of popularity which makes a resort "the place to go" for no particular reason other than that people seem to be going there. But, on the whole, it wouldn't be surprising if next year saw many of the "Lubricity Clubs" and the "250 Clubs" and the "Humidors" re-converted into the garages and stables from which they were originally evolved, and lots of people left with nothing to do with their nightly spend-money of $250 except to save it. . . . Then it will be about time for another War.

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Anonymously — John Farrar

THE generous ladies and gentlemen who have been giving of their time to write their opinions of books and life to this scribe are here thanked. I have answered most of their queries. Some of them, I have passed on to those closely interested in their remarks. However, through these columns I should like Glenway Wescott to know that a lady who styled herself a grandmother wrote to commend me on my praise of his grandmotherly novel. The letter from he, she, or it out in Illinois which purported to come from a student in the International Correspondence School was a masterpiece. I should like to use it here, but the boss wouldn't let me. It was, as Percy Hammond might say, sprung from a mind pendulous with wit and moist with vitriol, or, as Dorothy Parker might put it, it was a little dandy!

While mentioning that lovely lady, whose verses of coy tragedy place her as the Emily Dickinson of the Hotel Algonquin, it lies close to my heart to say that if you are not reading her reviews in *The New Yorker* you are missing a treat, as John Farrar would and does put it. If I were a writer of books, I should never send another manuscript to the printer for fear she might happen on it and tear it from its bindings with the delicate claws of her superb viciousness. She recently reviewed a book I like by an author I like, yet after reading her subtle paragraphs, subtle in phrasing but by no means subtle in the sentiment they conveyed, I took myself to my favorite corner and stood in it with my face to the wall, then I hid the book in the piano. Of course I shall have to take it out again when someone wants to play a tune, but that is another matter. Her review of "Lay Sermons" by Margot Asquith was such a combination of acumen and nonsense that it rivalled every other squib in the magazine for humor of the first water. (Printer stet "of the first water", it's a good old phrase and has helped many a tired business man at the end of a perfect day). It's the best review this reporter has read since Ruth Hale criticized Walter de la Mare's "Memoirs of a Midget" some years ago, in these pages.

May I be permitted space to quote a few lines from a current best-seller, a book highly praised by certain critics, though not by Dorothy Parker as yet! This is a guessing game. Who wrote them? Who, I ask you, who?

"He felt inclined to weep, as though the sun were not shining, the world were not all his, the most beautiful woman on earth were not eager for his arms. He felt her very beauty slipping away from him as she spoke."

or

"He was awake again in the early dawn. She was sleeping with her arms flung out toward him. The fruit of his vigil was that he knew nothing could be so beautiful as the body of this woman who loved him. When her eyes opened, they met his, and the smile of his adoration."

or this

" 'The next time you fall in love, it will be an original love-affair — you'll say it's the first taste you ever had of divine ecstasy — but it will be just like our love, dear companion.' "

and once more

"His heart ached for that beautiful comrade — oh, not cheap! — who had leaned with him on the pasture gate that evening, when their friend the cow had blessed them with her presence, and the moon had translated their feelings into light."

"Lovely," I hear you murmuring over in the corner, dear lady of the moist and sentimental eye. Yes, isn't it? Perfectly lovely. Fundamental. Tinged with rare emotion and feeling. You guess Ethel M. Dell, little man? No, you're wrong and it's not Floyd, either. Elinor Glyn? Ah no, you're warm, but it's not a couple of passages from "It".

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Smart girl! You're right. It was the cow that gave it away. Lovely heroine for a novel, a cow. You say it can't be John Erskine? Well, it is. Read "Adam and Eve — Though he Knew Better". Professor Erskine does, but alas! he didn't!

No worse trick was ever played on an author than quoting unrelated paragraphs from his book and making fun of them. I am quite conscious of that, and also of the fact that Professor Erskine in his latest novel employs a deal of his well-known wit at woman's expense, and shows an excellent knowledge of barnyard psychology. Yet he has fallen prey to the demands of a public for more and more of the same thing, and since the glitter and brilliance of "The Private Life of Helen of Troy", and the genial wisdom of "Galahad", he has diluted the method to a point where, if he next attacks the Prehistoric Ages in his pursuit of a disguise for his re-writing of "What Every Young Man Should Know", he will lose the admiration of his faithful following and gain millions of readers in the shadowy hinterlands where men read Zane Grey and women are beginning to read John Erskine.

At luncheon at the Query Club the other day, (a club, by the way, that so highly resented my calling it an organization of ladies that I suppose I must now describe it as an organization of members of the female sex who do not consider themselves ladies) — well then, at luncheon the other day, where Tim Coward made his first speech as the youngest of the young publishers, Margaret Widdemer also breathed words above the coffee cups, as Mr. Hammond of *The N. Y. Herald Tribune* might put it! Among other stories she told one which seems to me to start the mind thinking when it comes to this eternal problem of the "Book-of-the-Month Club" and "The Literary Guild". It seems that she has been talking in various parts of the country at book-fairs and what not. After talks by famous and beautiful authors there are often ladies and others who ask questions. The intelligence of the questions, I hear, does not always depend upon the size of the audiences or of the ladies. At any rate, Miss Widdemer, who is a writer of good poetry and successful novels, says that the question most often asked her was what she thought of the "Book-of-the-Month Club" and "The Literary Guild". Since she claims to know nothing of them, she did what always pleases any questioner — turned the tables and said, "What do you think?"

The reply most often heard was, "Well, I find them very useful. You know before we had them we used to waste time reading so many books that nobody talked about!"

While the implications of this reply are staggering, it is well to remember that after we have finished off our neighbors books are a pretty good thing to talk about. (Publisher's advt.)

Since Mr. Benchley has taken over the theatrical criticism for this paper and I can't get free seats any more, I must think twice before going to the theater, and usually choose "Proctor's 86th Street". This is a tragic fact; for most of the time I'm afraid it is where they try out all the green Keith-Albee acts, although a comedian turned up there the other evening named Bobby — or was it Billy? — Hallen, who made me laugh until my neighbor burned me with his cigar butt. Now I don't feel holy about vaudeville the way Gilbert Seldes does, or used to; but I do like it to be funny, and there is nothing more unpleasant in the theater than to suffer with actors on the stage who are trying to put over an act and it won't push. There is much to be said for the hook and the flung cabbage. They save everyone a lot of pain.

The opera season is in full fling, and I should like to trill a few canary notes about Rosa Ponselle. She is dark, and graceful in a portly way, although in comparison with most divas she is a slender reed; but her voice is a golden, throbbing, true one, and it grows more beautiful each year. She has gained, too, in the suiting of her action to her vocal performance. And, what is most important to this listener, and is not always true in the environs of gold and plush, she never, well hardly ever, deviates from the pitch.

"Nightstick", a melodrama written by at

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least half the playwrights on Broadway in a collaboration which is not confusion, proved to be a tight, pistol-studded story which makes its way to a thrilling conclusion with a good deal of excitement, a larding of sentiment, and scarcely any sex appeal.

Having met Max Reinhardt, I decided that it wasn't imperative to see "A Mid-Summer Night's Dream" in the one language I failed in at college. Besides I hear that all the pixies are acrobats, which seems hardly fair.

Beverley Nichols is back from Chicago, having interviewed the Mayor thereof and retained his sartorial prestige. He declares him to be the world's greatest comedian including Frank Sullivan and Ed Wynn. Speaking of Mayor Thompson and his manly single-handed war against the British Empire, an interesting psychological phenomenon recently came to my attention. A book published in this country and highly praised by all our critics who took the trouble to read it, including one of the Van Dorens (which speaks volumes), was submitted to an English publisher of repute. He wrote, "I am sorry to turn down this book", only I shouldn't put this in quotes because he didn't say "Turn down". "Have you read it yourself, because my reader says it's utter tosh!" Now, not only has this book been highly praised in this country but widely read. The English publisher is probably right, because the book was about a part of the British Empire; but to a humble American it seemed beautifully written and worth the praise and the public it has received. I never will forget the horror with which I once read a story of Vermont, published first in England, submitted with highest praise by an English firm. It was something; but it wasn't Vermont. Try as we may, I suppose it is impossible accurately to gauge the two publics, and what each one will take as descriptive of the other, or of itself, for that matter.

Coming toward the end of this piece to the thing I have been wanting to write about all along, but having felt the need of a few caustic remarks before indulging in outbursts of complete and unadulterated screeches of enthusiasm, I lay down before me on my movable typewriter table which someone (you notice I no longer mention the members of my family in these articles) gave me, a curiously chunky volume with a gay green, black, brown and purple wrapper, called "The Bridge of San Luis Rey". I suppose it will not win the Pulitzer Prize Award; but, by cracky, it should. Will you please consider that every sentence hereafter is followed by an exclamation point; but in consideration of the feelings of my well-meaning friends, including Harry of *The N. Y. Evening Post*, a most ingenious and graceful and gentle and truth-telling person, I shall omit these marks! (Stet that one, printer, just that teeny weeny one, as Alexander Woollcott might say.)

You cannot afford to miss it. Go out and buy it now. The best novel I have read in years. Scintillating with a wit not usual. (Publisher's advt. please quote.)

Thornton Wilder was a friend of mine at Yale; but please don't let that keep you from reading his novel even if you do hail from Harvard or Princeton or even Dartmouth or West Point; or if the fact that he is a friend of mine stands in your way. I haven't seen him for several years, and it's probably only a desire to boast that makes me presume to call him a friend anyhow.

"The Cabala", his first published work, was received with acclaim. Some of the acclaim was ridiculous, and I dislike seeing his original, fresh, limpid style likened to that of Walter Pater. It's his own. I can no more imagine Thornton Wilder indulging in a typewriter-worn phrase, than I can imagine him hunting for an unusual sentence. He can write. He doesn't have to worry and strive and seek for effect. He has not been spoiled by journalism, or made self-conscious by the hurly-burly of metropolitan back-slapping. He has kept away from it all, and has slowly, deliberately, developed his mind and his style until, with two small books, he takes rank, in my opinion, with Henry James, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville and the one or two other giants of American letters.

When he was at Yale, along with Stephen Vincent Benét, Philip Barry, Richmond

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Brooks Barrett, and others of that writing generation, although he was younger than most of them, he wrote a play called "The Trumpet Shall Sound". It was published serially in the pages of the dun-colored *Yale Literary Magazine*. The discerning editor was, if I remember correctly, Charles Rumford Walker, whose "Bread and Fire" appeared last season. This play, which left that portion of the undergraduate body who cared to read it, breathless, was produced modestly in New York last season. It was written while Phil Barry was still turning out untutored farces, before he had developed under the tutelage of Baker. That play, written by a mere boy, had elements of greatness in it. Its theme, its guiding spirit, was the same as that of "The Cabala", the same as that of "The Bridge of San Luis Rey". It is written with a sort of divine sophistication, an irony which includes pity and sweetness, a fierce wit, that plays with mankind and yet fancies faith, a robust hatred of sham, that can play with the stuff of sentiment and leave the throat aching, as Mr. Erskine might say. It is a conception of God as a divine and fatal wisdom brooding over the sorrows and passions of mankind.

The idea of the book is stunning, as William Lyon Phelps might put it. If you want to know what it is all about, read it. If you want to talk about it without reading it, you may consult Isabel Paterson's excellent review which appeared in "Books". Let me again do the unfair thing and quote isolated passages from the volume itself. With what a different effect!

" . . . the whole purport of literature is the notation of the heart. Style is but the faintly contemptible vessel in which the bitter liquid is recommended to the world."

or

"It is true that the Limeans were given to interpolating trivial songs into the most exquisite comedies and some lachrymose effects into the austerest music; but at least they never submitted to the boredom of a misplaced veneration."

or

"The public for which masterpieces are intended is not on this earth."

or, of love which is only love as passion,

"Many who have spent a lifetime in it can tell us less of love than the child that lost a dog yesterday."

When we have put down this lovely story, for story it is, we suddenly realize that, with a perverse and diabolical sense of satire, Mr. Wilder has constructed an exquisite and poignant fable, whose closing lines are, "Even memory is not necessary for love. There is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning". But he has also written a savage attack on the modern method of biography. He has shamed all those who, brilliant as they are, amusing as they are, dig into the kitchen and the outhouses to reconstruct the characters of those whose characters could never have been understood, even while they lived, by the prying eye or the pricking needle; but only by the love that is grounded on understanding, or the all-seeing eye of some beneficent but disillusioned deity.

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PRESENT THEE AT FELICITY AWHILE

By Burton Rascoe

A NEW MASTER

THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY. *By Thornton Wilder. Albert & Charles Boni. $2.50.*

TEN years ago last autumn I wrote a review for *The Chicago Tribune* which I captioned somewhat cupidinously "Here's a Chance to Own Another First Edition". The book under consideration was "The Cream of the Jest" by James Branch Cabell. That was a year before the publication of "Jurgen". I had just come full flush for the first time upon the work of that master ironist and so eager was I to gain an audience for him among my readers that I employed every cajolery at my command, in the course of my review, including the appeal to avarice. I dared to predict that within "five or ten years" first edition copies of "The Cream of the Jest" would bring a premium. As a matter of fact, within less than five years first edition copies of that book sold for as high as $40. Few securities listed on the Stock Exchange scored during the same period a corresponding rise in value.

Since that time I have occasionally made similar predictions. Not frequently, for first-rate books by comparatively unknown authors do not come along every day. And in each case my prediction has come true. There was nothing occult about it: it was like making a guess that Henry Ford's automobile designed for the poor man's purse would turn out to be a profitable enterprise.

I say all this by way of preface to my suggestion that if you can lay hands upon a first edition copy of "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" and on a first edition of Mr. Wilder's earlier novel, "The Cabala", you will ultimately be the richer not only in intellectual experience but in actual cash. For I do not hesitate to predict that a few years hence first editions of the work of Thornton Wilder will be among the most avidly sought after items among collectors.

It is on the cards that Thornton Wilder will in time be accounted one of the treasures of our literature. He has qualities that are bound to be acclaimed by members of the extreme left as well as by members of the extreme right; the clarity and purity of his prose must appeal to the academicians and the worldliness of his ideas must appeal to the sophisticated. He is, in a word or so, a made man.

There is no newcomer on the horizon, not even Ernest Hemingway, Julian Green or Elizabeth Madox Roberts, whose future I would bet on with so much enthusiasm and so much cold cash as I would on Thornton Wilder's. He is almost alone in his eminence; though, perhaps, he might bow in cordial recognition to Glenway Wescott and at least nod courteously to Robert Nathan. He can afford, now, to be genial; and in time younger writers will come to him for his blessing. At the age of thirty he has achieved the astonishing feat of writing a classic.

What do I mean by a classic? Well, let us say that I have in mind Goldsmith's "The Vicar of Wakefield", Prosper Merimée's "Carmen", Anatole France's "The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard", Madame de Lafayette's "La Princesse de Clèves", all of them somewhat in the genre of "The Bridge of San Luis Rey", all of them brief, compact, beautiful, perfect in their several ways. And, if I must say so, "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" is finer than any one of them, in that its telling involves an artistic problem more considerable and more intricate than the problems the other authors posed for themselves.

In "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" Thornton Wilder has accomplished, under the guise of a simple tale, several unusual things. He has described the apparently metaphysical in terms of the physical in a manner to please both the orthodox and the heterodox. He

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has represented five aspects of love that is really love and not mere concupiscence. And he has given to coincidence a touch of irony that is at once sublime, breath-taking, and a trifle puzzling. Can we, after all, be so sure that the accident which took five inter-related lives when the Bridge of San Luis Rey collapsed had a merely physical interpretation? And still, if it had not, what would be the point in Fate's scheme or intention? Merely to have hit upon a design so intricate for a novel is evidence of talent: to have worked it out successfully is sheer genius.

On a Friday, July the twentieth, in the year 1714, the osier bridge that spanned the gorge on the highroad between Lima and Cuzco in Peru broke and carried five persons to their death. That bridge, "a mere ladder of thin slats, swung out over the gorge, with handrails of dried vine", had been a symbol of permanence in a world of change and destruction. It was "unthinkable that it should break" for it "seemed to be among the things that last forever". In Peru those catastrophes "which lawyers shockingly call 'acts of God'" were happening all the time; tidal waves washed away cities, earthquakes shook the towns and towers fell upon the innocent and guilty alike; but the Peruvians were especially touched by the rent in the bridge of San Luis Rey.

Brother Juniper, a little red-haired Franciscan from northern Italy who had witnessed the accident, was the only one, however, who did anything about it. Brother Juniper made it his business to find out just why the bridge had broken and just why those five persons were chosen for death. He had felt all the time that theology should take its place among the exact sciences; but of all the hurts, sorrows and disasters to which he had been witness, none before the collapse of the Bridge of San Luis Rey had afforded him a perfect laboratory in the ways of God. A pious and patient servant of Christ, he was always on the outlook for experiments to justify the ways of God to man, that he might the more convincingly show to obstinate converts that their pains were inserted into their lives for their own good.

Brother Juniper set to work collecting all the data available touching upon the lives of the five persons involved in the accident. He interviewed everyone who had known or known of them. He achieved a great mass of conflicting and contradictory testimony which he faithfully recorded in his notebooks. "Everyone knew that he was working on some sort of memorial of the accident and everyone was very helpful and misleading." He learned every external thing about the principals, and "yet for all his diligence Brother Juniper never knew the central passion of Dona Maria's life; nor of Uncle Pio's, not even of Esteban's".

"Brother Juniper found that there was least to be learned from those who had been most closely associated with the subjects of his inquiry. Madre Maria del Pilar talked to him at length about Pepita, but she did not tell him of her own ambitions for her. The Perichole was at first difficult of approach, but presently even liked the Franciscan. Her characterization of Uncle Pio flatly contradicted the stores of unsavory testimonies that he had acquired elsewhere. Her allusions to her son were few and conceded with pain. They closed the interview abruptly. The Captain Alvarado told what he could of Esteban and of Uncle Pio. Those who know most in this realm, venture least.

"I shall spare you Brother Juniper's generalizations. They are always with us. He thought he saw in the same accident, the wicked visited by destruction and the good called early to Heaven. He thought he saw pride and wealth confounded as an object lesson to the world, and he thought he saw humility crowned and rewarded for the edification of the city. But Brother Juniper was not satisfied with his reasons. It was just possible that the Marquesa de Montemayor was not a monster of avarice and Uncle Pio of self-indulgence."

Brother Juniper's book of facts, touching upon the lives of the victims of the catastrophe, together with his conclusions, all done in piety and faith, fell under the eyes of the Inquisition and was deemed heretical. Both the book and Brother Juniper were condemned to the flames.

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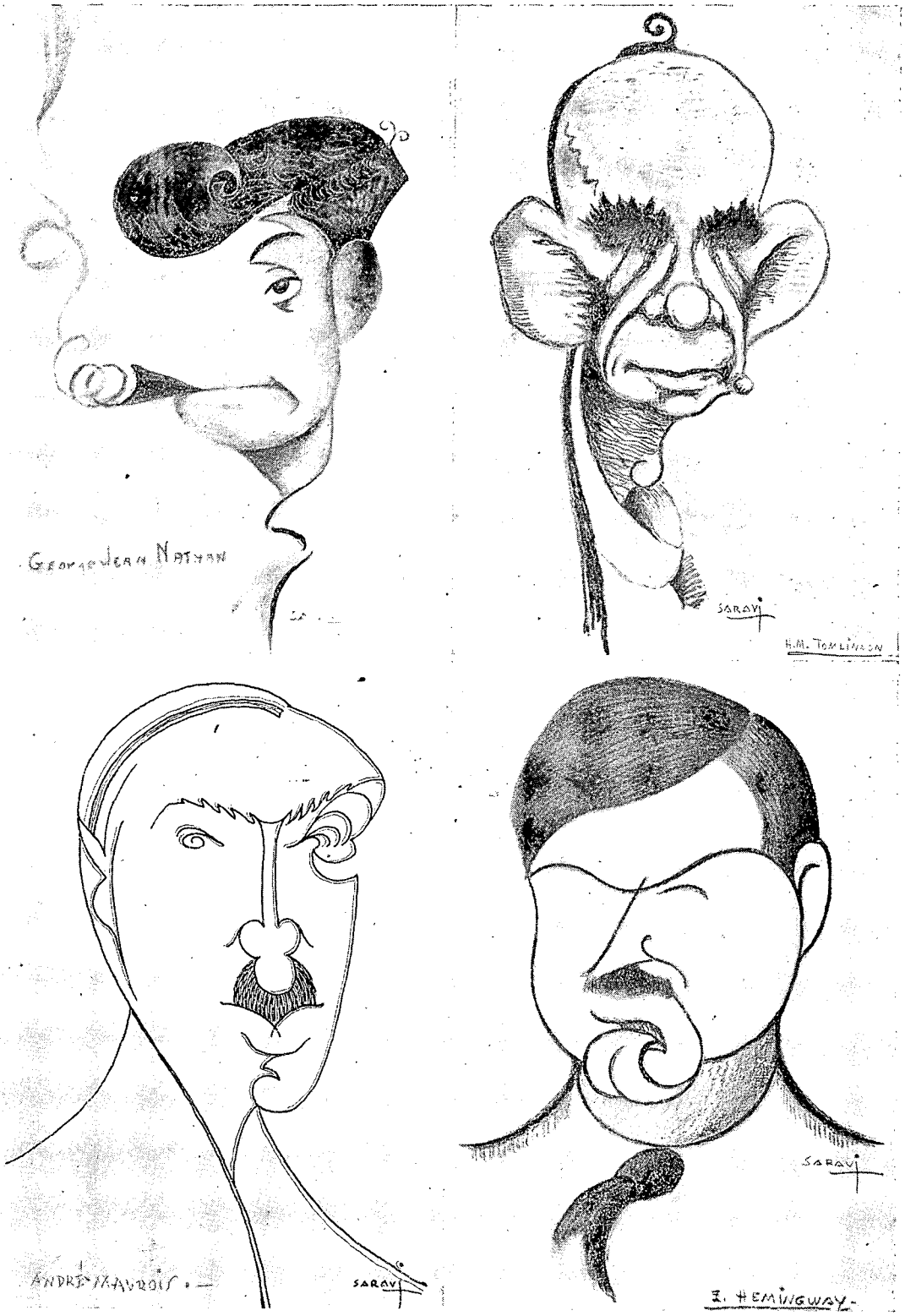

George Jean Nathan; H. M. Tomlison; André Maurois; Ernest Hemingway
Four Caricatures by Saravi

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"The art of biography," comments Mr. Wilder, "is more difficult than is generally supposed." Every one had given the little friar irreconcilable reports on the characters of the five victims of the bridge's collapse, and those who knew them best gave him the most unsatisfactory testimony.

In telling the story that eluded Brother Juniper, Wilder forewarns his readers: "I who claim to know so much, isn't it possible that even I have missed the very spring within the spring?" Never was omniscience on the part of the author disclaimed with more neatness and finesse. Not once does the author indicate whether he believes that the tragedy of the bridge was by accident or intention; and it is left open to the reader to interpret it as he will. "Some say," Wilder writes, "that to the gods we are like the flies that the boys kill on a summer day, and some say, on the contrary, that the very sparrows do not lose a feather that has not been brushed away by the finger of God."

First there was the Marquesa de Montemayor, who died in the accident along with her little personal maid and ward, Pepita. To the Limeans she was an ugly and drunken old woman, the butt of music-hall jests because of her stinginess and inebriety. But in the physical *débris* that was her body there lurked a magnanimous and beautiful character and a mentality of extraordinary brilliance. She loved her daughter, who had left Peru to marry wealth and title and to get away from the fretting solicitude and fatiguing love her mother bore for her. To this daughter the Marquesa wrote voluminous letters which became a momument of Spanish literature, so unstudied were they in their grace and charm. In writing them the old lady had had but one aim and that was to elicit by them one word of affection from her vain and unfilial daughter. She poured out gossip; she related anecdotes; she made epigrams, all to entertain her daughter and to win some word of commendation from her. She was merely told that her letters were tedious and indiscreet and unless she were more brief and cautious the letters might cause trouble.

The prototype of the Marquesa de Montemayor is unquestionably Madame de Sévigné and the letters Wilder has so successfully imitated are the letters Madame de Sévigné wrote to her daughter, Madame de Grignan. I have heard that Wilder had in mind Catherine of Sienna in drawing his portrait of that great woman, the Abbess Madre Maria del Pilar, who had picked Pepita to be her successor and was looking forward to schooling her in common sense and hard facts as well as in piety and good works.

Then there was the disreputable rake, Uncle Pio, whose chief passion in life had been to make a great actress out of a fiery and talented, but (at the time he first saw her) an unattractive and awkward twelve year old café singer. He bought Micaela Villegas from her guardian and wrote songs for her and set her to endless exercises in acting, mimicry and enunciation. She became under his tutelage The Perichole, the greatest actress in Peru, then retired to the country when she had attached as protector a noble exile, to whom she bore three children, the youngest of whom Uncle Pio prevailed upon her to allow him to bring back to Lima. Uncle Pio and the child perished on the bridge.

Then there were Esteban and Manuel, twin brothers whose love for each other is one of the finest stories in literature. Esteban fell in love with The Perichole and disaster followed quickly upon this circumstance. The relationship between the brothers was strained from that moment and never again what it had been. Esteban got an infection from a scratch on his toe and died in delirium. Manuel took his name and tried also to assume his personality and was going away to sea when he was killed by the collapse of the bridge.

The character drawing throughout this book is superb. It is informed with delicious irony and with a pointed wit. Of Uncle Pio, Wilder writes: "He possessed the six attributes of the adventurer — a memory for names and faces, with the aptitude for altering his own; secrecy; the talent for falling into conversation with strangers; and that freedom from conscience that springs from a contempt for the dozing rich he preyed upon". Of the Archbishop,

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he writes: "There was something in Lima that was wrapped up in yards of violet satin from which protruded a great dropsical head and two fat pearly hands; and that was its archbishop. Between the tolls of flesh that surrounded them looked out two black eyes speaking discomfort, kindliness and wit. A curious and eager soul was imprisoned in all this lard, but by dint of never refusing himself a pheasant or a goose or his daily procession of Roman wines, he was his own bitter jailer. He loved his cathedral; he loved his duties; he was very devout. Some days he regarded his bulk ruefully; but the distress of remorse was less poignant than the distress of fasting and he was presently found deliberating over the secret messages that a certain roast sends to the certain salad that will follow it. And to punish himself he led an exemplary life in every other respect".

For such writing we cannot be too thankful. I am not one to express even a mock distress at the present tendency of so many writers toward a naked, violent and even brutal language; but it is good to know that our native literature is not all of a pattern and that it has variety in mood as well as theme. And the smiling urbanity and tender irony of Thornton Wilder is, just now, among the younger writers a precious novelty.

THE CODE OF HONOR

DAYBREAK. *By Arthur Schnitzler. Translated from the German by William A. Drake. Simon & Schuster. $1.50.*

THIS beautiful and exciting little story contains a great moral lesson. We, in this country, can appreciate it the more because the whole *modus operandi* of the protagonist's conscience is foreign to us. We can have a detached point of view toward the problem in ethics it involves. We have no military caste in America and the code of the corps is something we of the laity know little about and can never take with any great seriousness. Therefore, in reading this book, we can see what a preposterously egotistical and yet tragical thing a man's notion of "honor" can be.

Schnitzler has here related the story of a young German lieutenant who gambled and lost in a single night more than he would be able to earn in three years. His motives, at first, were altruistic. Another army officer, whom he knew only slightly, came to him for a loan to pay a gambling debt. The amount needed was 1,000 gulden. Willi did not have that much; but his sense of honor in these matters told him that the desperate Lieutenant von Bogner would be disgraced and cashiered if the money were not raised. He offered to take a chance with what money he had in a card game and if his luck was good he would advance von Bogner the money.

Willi played and won heavily. He was ahead several thousand gulden. He was rich. He could buy new capes and sword belts to charm the ladies; he could afford rendezvous in expensive restaurants; he could live on a magnificent scale — for a while. Realization that it would be only for a while tempted him to greater stakes in hope of greater gain.

He lost. He was soon down to the amount he originally had, plus the thousand gulden he could give to von Bogner. His new cape and sword sheath had vanished and with them his rendezvous, with champagne and costly dinners. He risked the money meant for von Bogner; he risked his last cent, he borrowed. He borrowed and lost until he was eleven thousand gulden in debt to a South American tradesman whom he openly despised. Then the game ended. According to the code, a debt of honor must be paid within twenty-four hours; and the South American was coldly emphatic in the matter of promptness. He told Willi that he would inform the commander of Willi's regiment if the money were not paid on the hour.

Willi sought his rich uncle only to find that during the long period since he had last found it useful to show some interest in the uncle's existence the latter had married a young harlot and, having turned his wealth over to her, had from her only a small allowance. The wife had shown business enterprise and foresight, and had made much money in speculation and investments; but she permitted him to see her only on

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rare occasions and gave him not a penny before his allowance was due.

Willi found out the address of his aunt and called upon her. He discovered that she had formerly been one of his lights-o'-love, one whom he had treated rather shabbily. He made up to her and impressed upon her the urgency of his need for money, while at the same time playing the ardent lover. They spent a night together and when he believed that she was going to advance him the money she left him a thousand gulden note instead, in payment for their night of love — a bit of mockery at the small sum he had left for her when they had last spent a night together — a gesture she had loathed at that time because she was in love with him.

The thousand was of no use to Willi; but he kept it and sent it to von Bogner. Then he put a bullet through his head. The uncle, having meanwhile prevailed upon his wife to advance him the eleven thousand gulden Willi needed to save his honor, arrived just too late.

"One always remained an officer, no matter what one did — or at any rate, one became an officer again when one had paid one's gambling debts."

In other words a man of honor was still a man of honor if he blew out his brains rather than be reported to his commanding officer for failure to pay a gambling debt when it was due. If he observed that fine point of the code, he might act the part of the swine in every other particular. He might play for stakes higher than he could afford; he might insult one of the players under the assumption that that player was not his social equal and could not therefore challenge him to a duel; and he could deceive his uncle with his uncle's wife, not for pleasure but meretriciously, by pretending a sentiment he did not feel and asking her for money which he could never repay.

I said at the beginning of this review that "Daybreak" carried a moral lesson. But it is not the conventional and obvious one, that gambling is a vice or that the wages of sin is death. We should be taught by this little story to examine the central factor in the code among those people who make so much ado about their honor; for it is very apt to be a weak, vain, and not very admirable one, permitting them a free conscience to act discreditably in most of those relations with human beings which call for fairness and simple justice, kindness and common honesty.

That, I believe, was the point Schnitzler was getting at in this ironic novelette. There was nothing very tragic in Willi's suicide; for his life had no real significance and his character was not worth preserving. Even in death he was not ennobled. And that is the final irony.

CAESAR FOR THE CINEMA

JULIUS CAESAR. *By Victor Thaddeus. Brentano's. $5.*

ALL histories that are not mere compilations of dates, records and statistics are works of the imagination; for the testimony of eye-witnesses is extremely fallible, especially when an event is calamitous or dramatic; and the report that we have upon the nature of any person or thing is governed entirely by the temperament of the person who gives it. Also, it is the habit of man to englamor his past and to exalt himself among his fellows whenever an occasion arises in which he can dramatize himself before an audience as the hero of an event, concerning the truth of which the audience can have no knowledge.

Edmund L. Pearson has explained how this vanity, this yearning for a brief moment in the spotlight, has often complicated the solution of murder mysteries and has probably often resulted in the miscarriage of justice. At almost every sensational trial at least one person comes forward as an eye-witness and gives details that are remarkably complete, colorful, circumstantial and yet palpably false. Such witnesses become immediately the center of attention; the corpse is forgotten, the defendant no longer occupies the principal rôle in the drama; and as credence is given the witness's account, that account becomes more elaborate, more rhetorical, more inspired — a work of fiction. Such testimony is rarely altogether impugned because no one can

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ever be quite sure that it is essentially false, even when the embroidery is manifestly so; and, moreover, it has had its emotional effect upon the jury and so has disturbed the balance in the scale of justice, even if it is proved fraudulent.

People with the irresponsible imaginations of children will tell you of events in which they participated and will seem to believe their fictions even when you know they are fibbing. And Anatole France has told in a little parable called "Putois" how the existence of a non-existent person came to be believed in by an entire community, many citizens having their own tales to tell of actual dealings with him. Those who were conscious that they were lying believed implicity in the testimony of the others until time and repetition of the tales made them believe their own lies too.

Historians wage terrific wars among themselves, each under the delusion that he is talking about history and is the real possessor of the truth about some past event or about the true nature of some historical character; whereas he is merely exposing his own soul in the impressions evoked within him by the contemplation of testimony he has correlated about the past. Poor Anthony Froude, after rowing all his life, went to his grave still convinced that he was the only person who understood Caesar.

Since Froude's day, historians have had less faith in their knowledge and are more and more disclaiming infallibility. They are making history frankly a reflection of their own individual and uninhibited temperaments. They are using the data of history to correct romantic illusions, to comment upon the shortcomings of an age, or simply to tell a story.

Mr. Thaddeus is in this last class of historians. He has given his imagination free rein to fill up all those gaps in the accessible knowledge concerning the exact circumstances of an event. To illustrate: After he has told how the conspirators surrounded Caesar and stabbed him, he writes: "Above the red swirl of knives flashing over him he sees Pompey looking down, first a tiny marble face leering at him from an infinite distance, then suddenly of such colossal proportions that it obliterates the whole world in darkness".

Now it is impossible for Mr. Thaddeus or any one else to know whether at the moment he was being killed Caesar took note of the statute of Pompey and thought of the face of Pompey as leering at him. Mr. Thaddeus makes use of the historical present and frequently tells us what is going on in the mind of Caesar at a given moment even though Caesar himself has given us no testimony in the matter. It all reminds me somewhat of that parlor intelligence test in which one is asked to tell what was the impossible feature of a long story involving a dream a man had which was so vivid that he died of shock before he woke up. Inasmuch as Caesar did not live to describe his inner feelings at the moment of his own death, we cannot know what those feelings were. We can only guess. And guess-work, unhappily, is about all we can get about the remote past.

But if the guess-work is interesting enough in itself it has value not only as entertainment but as instruction in the humanities as well. And Mr. Thaddeus's guess-work is interesting. He is also original. He is original in that he has made a combination of the two most popular historical methods: the iconoclastic and the dramatic. He is intent upon destroying the legend of grandeur that we have concerning Roman civilization and upon making Caesar out to be a mere bandit adventurer, made powerful by circumstances rather than by special ability, by using brute force, and managing by bribes and by his cunning at bargaining to attain his ends.

And yet while intent upon this purpose Mr. Thaddeus makes use of the sort of literary effects we have come to associate with Emil Ludwig. Those literary effects are somewhat oratorical; they consist in short, thunderous sentences, packed with resonant adjectives, which roll up dramatically to a climax like the second act of a mystery play. Mr. Thaddeus employs tension and suspense; and by so doing Caesar becomes glamorous even when Mr. Thaddeus would have him appear otherwise,

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because Caesar is the center of moving and colorful events.

It is Mr. Thaddeus's intention, as he says in his foreword, to show that the grandeur of Rome is a myth and that "grandeur" is a word as misplaced "as it would be applied to a huge and gaudy side-show". But he goes on to state:

"We see the hundred-percent Romans brawling drunkenly in their Forum — lying on the cushions of their litters caressing with obscene fingers their boy favorites — gloating sadistically in their amphitheaters and circuses over the butchery of unhappy gladiators and starved wild animals. They are fat, heavy-jowled men with greedy, cruel eyes."

Doesn't Mr. Thaddeus know that when he writes like that he is making Rome thrilling and glamorous — in a way? Has he never heard the Rev. John Roach Straton picture the vice of Atlantic City and Palm Beach in such terms? And does he not know that when Cecil B. De Mille is preparing to give the world a great religious play he does not neglect to include a Roman or Babylonian orgy as the pièce-de-resistance of his photo-epic? . . . Vice depicted on the grand scale becomes no longer vicious but something remote, thrilling and sumptuous. Mr. Thaddeus should be read to the accompaniment of "The Ride of the Valkyries" and extracts from Tschaikowsky's "1812" on Roxy's pipe organ.

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CONRAD: MASTER ON SEA AND LAND

By John Macy

JOSEPH CONRAD: LIFE AND LETTERS. *By G. Jean Aubry. 2 vols. Doubleday, Page. $10.*

ALMOST as a rule the literary artist writes interesting letters. An "official" biography of a writer which was not "Life and Letters" would seem inadequate, and in many cases the letters tell more of the subject than the narrative and explanatory notes of the biographer. I can think of no first-rate novelist, poet, essayist, historian whose private correspondence does not illuminate his work, is not in itself delightful and instructive literature. And sometimes, as in the case of Cowper, a secondary artist, the letters to friends are more charming than the formal compositions. Who would not sacrifice more than one novel or poem to keep the correspondence of Sterne, Johnson, Lamb, Byron, Thackeray, Stevenson, Goethe? Lamb's letters contain as much good criticism as his deliberate essays. There are few more fascinating books in English than Scoones's "Four Centuries of English Letters" or the collection by E. V. Lucas, finely called "The Gentlest Art".

We should take it on faith before examination that Conrad wrote interesting letters. And his letters are indeed even better than one expected them to be. His correspondence is an intimate revelation of his character, his methods of work, his purposes, disappointments, difficulties, admirations for the work of other men. Conrad was a self-conscious, self-appraising artist. He attacked his work with wilful determined application. Those enchanting rhythms and magical phrases were not produced by irrational inspiration — though every great artist has inspired moments — but were carefully, painfully, elaborated. He repeatedly says that writing was a grind. And much of his creative life was filled with depression and weariness. But his superb courage and loyalty to his task did not permit depression to gain control of his spirit. No writer ever worked harder, more faithfully, with more disinterestedly passionate devotion to the right idea and the right expression of it. A master workman, a model for all who would give their lives to the service of truth and beauty. Not Flaubert himself was more self-scrutinizing, conscientious, exacting of the best that was in him.

All the adventure in Conrad's experience occurred during the first half of his life, his youth and early prime. The second half was uneventful, years of quiet pursuit of his career as man of letters. Stored full of strange seas, magic isles, mysterious jungles, and, more important than all scenes, human beings, normal and eccentric, who roam the earth, he retired from the great round world and was like a beached keel for thirty years.

Conrad is so supremely the prose-poet of the sea that we forget how much of him is on land. He himself objected to being considered a spinner of nautical yarns. "It seems to me," he writes, "that people imagine I sit here and brood over sea stuff. That is quite a mistake. I brood certainly, but . . . 'Youth' has been called a fine sea-story. Is it? . . . Surely those stories of mine where the sea enters can be looked at from another angle. In the 'Nigger' I give the psychology of a group of men and render certain aspects of nature. But the problem that faces them is not a problem of the sea, it is merely a problem that has arisen on board a ship where the conditions of complete isolation from all land entanglements make it stand out with a particular force and colouring. In other of my tales the principal point is the study of a particular man, or a particular event. My only sea-book, and the only tribute to a life which I have lived in my own particular way, is 'The Mirror of the Sea'."

Conrad's primary interest is people. Galsworthy felt this when as a young man on Conrad's ship he heard Conrad tell

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"tales of ships and storms, of Polish revolution, of his youthful Carlist gun-running adventure, of the Malay seas, and the Congo; and of men and men". Men and men, they are Conrad's interest. Sometimes, but not in the larger number of the tales, the great waters are the scene upon which the drama is enacted, the conflicts, defeats, triumphs. But I feel sure that if Conrad had never been a seaman, never had adventures in the mysterious East, he would have been a distinguished novelist, a creator of people, of character.

"I don't care for writing at all," he says, strangely enough. "What interests me is creative work." His admiration for Henry James, his *très cher maître*, shows where his heart is. Mere literature does not engage him, but action, truth, human nature, the inner activities of his persons at least as much as their external circumstances. Certainly he is much more than a marine painter. Recall the many tales in which the action takes place on western land or on tropic islands where the sea, to be sure, is adjacent but has little to do with the story. And in the land scenes we may be too much enthralled, if too much be possible, by Conrad's miraculous descriptive power. His purpose, his sense of proportion bid us keep our attention on the characters, their deeds and emotions.

"Lord Jim" lives in the memory not by virtue of the exotic scene, which is indeed unforgettable in its color and mystery, but by the character and fate of the hero. In one of those moods of despondency which every artist feels when he looks upon a finished work and sees that it is not so good as he hoped to make it, Conrad tells Edward Garnett that "Lord Jim" is a "lump of clay", without the "*revealing* life". Of course he is unfair to his masterpiece. But one sentence is critically significant as showing his purpose here and in his other tales: "I wanted to obtain a sort of lurid light out of the very events". Well, thousands of readers feel that he did exactly that again and again. Note that the emphasis is on the events, not on the scene. As the alert H. G. Wells, responding immediately to "An Outcast of the Islands", truly says: "He imagines his scenes and their sequences like a master, he knows his individualities to their hearts". But Wells seems to make too much of the exotic novelty of Conrad's material: "He has a new and wonderful field in this East Indian novel of his".

Conrad's field was the world and he found his stories in many places. In "Tales of Unrest" are two amazing short masterpieces, "The Return" and "The Idiots", which Maupassant might have read with fraternal admiration, though of course they are pure Conrad and owe nothing to the French master. In these two stories, and others, the sea and the magical East play no part. Conrad is as much at home in the room of a house on land as in cabin or forecastle. In a note to "The Return" he phrases his purpose — a purpose which will be found realized in other tales — "The story consists for the most part of physical impressions, impressions of sight and sound". The impressionist was strong in Conrad. He was in quest of "lurid light", which is more subtle and difficult to realize than mere scenic picturesqueness.

Even in remote and uncanny scenes Conrad is bent upon penetrating the heart of man and woman. It is so in "Victory", which is laid in a strange far corner of the earth. Heyst and Lena are affected by their surroundings, by their lonely distance from the places where they were born, yet what happens to them under the tropical trees might have happened under an English elm. It is the inside process, not the outer circumstance that demands the highest capacity in a novelist. And in Conrad this capacity is so powerfully, acutely, developed that he is a great novelist, no mere spinner of yo-heave-ho yarns, but brother of Balzac, of Flaubert, of his beloved Henry James. And because of his adventures in the great world he has a sense of excitement, of vigorous action, greater than any of the more sedentary novelists. That Conrad's whole artistic soul was intent on truth to character is indicated by a brief illuminating note in a letter to a correspondent who had objected to Lena's reserve. Of course the novelist is right, though he is always ready to confess a fault. "I still think," he says,

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"the psychology is quite possible. My fault is that I haven't made Lena's reticence *credible* enough. . . . While I wrote, her silence seemed to me truth itself, a rigorous consequence of the character and the situation. It was not invented for the sake of 'the story'."

Sometimes Conrad himself seems to stress the physical scene as in the subtitle to "Nostromo" — "A Tale of the Seaboard". The initial conception of the book was the character, and the fictitious South American republic was a secondary invention. This book, the most powerful and involved of Conrad's novels, cost him two years of mental agony, which included long periods of illness and physical suffering. "Finis" left him exhausted and dissatisfied, and though a few friends cheered him, "Nostromo" was with the public, as he records in a letter to Arnold Bennett, "the blackest possible frost". The reason is not far to seek. It is the most complicated example in all Conrad's work of what Galsworthy notes as his trick of folding a story over and over upon itself. It finally emerges, clear as noon-light, but the way to the conclusion is sometimes entangled, obscure, apparently uncertain as to direction and continuity. The ordinary reader quite properly likes to have a story begin in an understandable, inviting way — a wide-open door through which one can enter and proceed with confidence. Now, the vast epic of "Nostromo" is approached somewhat as the facts would be approached by a curious inquiring stranger. Conrad is very fond of the method of seeming to discover the story as he goes, or of letting his favorite mouth-piece, the discursive Marlowe, unfold it. It is a method which gives verisimilitude and solidity to the whole, and you have to get the whole before you get anything! But this method does not instantly engage the reader's interest, and I confess that in my first ignorant admiration of "Nostromo" twenty years ago, I was puzzled by the sequence of the story and stupidly recorded an objection to it. I know better now and understand how masterfully, how inevitably, it is arranged, how essential this arrangement is to Conrad's deliberate objectivity.

The story of the composition of "Nostromo" is one of the strangest in literary biography. Conrad speaks of the struggle several times in the letters and gives a rather full account of it in "A Personal Record" which, however, is on the whole curiously restrained and tells much less about the man than the letters in which he lets himself go. "All I know is that for twenty months, neglecting the common joys of life . . . I had, like the prophet of old, 'wrestled with the Lord' for my creation, for the headlands of the coast, for the darkness of the Placid Gulf, the light on the snows, the clouds on the sky, and for the breath of life that had to be blown into the shapes of men and women . . . a long, desperate fray. Long! I suppose I went to bed sometimes and got up the same number of times. . . . But I had never been aware of the even flow of daily life. . . . Indeed it seemed to me that I had been sitting at that table surrounded by the litter of a desperate fray for days and nights on end." But after the struggle, as he writes quite calmly to his faithful agent, Pinker, "The result is good. . . . It is very genuine Conrad".

It is inevitable that the critics should have made much of the fact that Conrad was a Pole, and that he was almost perfectly bilingual (trilingual, for he never forgot Polish), and that he might have written in French. He makes it clear that he did not choose between French and English, that he did not master English but that English mastered him. "My faculty to write English is as natural as any other aptitude with which I might have been born. . . . It was I who was adopted by the genius of the language . . . its very idiom I truly believe had a direct action on my temperament. . . . If I had not written in English I would not have written at all."

In "A Personal Record" he says: "The English and Scots seamen (a much caricatured folk) had the last say in the formation of my character". And he did understand the English people, not only the seamen but the land-islanders. As Hugh Walpole justly says of the Fynes in "Chance", they are so English that "we wonder whether Trollope could have done more

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finely". Minute scrutiny, not worth the trouble, might discover a few Gallicisms or even "Sclavonicisms" in Conrad's style, but they certainly do not stand out and call attention to themselves. His spoken diction was slightly foreign, a bit French, but not his written idiom. He was a careful, enthusiastic, though not systematic student of English literature. He writes: "My business is not the reading of books — at any rate not the reading of fiction". But he was a close student of much that was finest in contemporary English literature, and he browsed in the established classics. Sometimes in his patient wrestling with his style he felt himself a foreigner, but I think it is little more than the feeling that we all have when we try to gain command of the language that we were born to, for every man is to some extent a foreigner in his native tongue in that he remains all his life a stranger to much of its power and richness. One statement of Conrad's in a letter to R. B. Cunninghame Graham is explicit: "Chaucer I have dipped into, reading aloud as you advised. I am afraid I am not English enough to appreciate fully the father of English literature. Moreover I am in general insensible to verse". Well, to many a born Englishman and American Chaucer's is an alien language.

One story of Conrad's, "Under Western Eyes", is so intensely Slavic that it is doubtful if any man born in western Europe could have conceived it, understood the people, grasped the social and historical details of the situation. He says of it, writing to Galsworthy: "I think that I am trying to capture the very soul of things Russian". And so far as a non-Russian can judge, he has succeeded magnificently. If this novel should come to us as a translation from a modern Russian master, we should accept it without question. I find no record of what Slavic critics think of that novel and the rest of Conrad's work, though there are studies of him in Russian, and he says that he was becoming known in Poland.

Sentences in the same letter to Galsworthy reveal the struggles of the artist and hint again that he sometimes had misgivings about his un-English qualities:

"You don't know what an inspiration-killing anxiety it is to think: 'Is it salable?' There's nothing more cruel than to be caught between one's impulse, one's act, and that question, which for me simply is a question of life and death. There are moments when the mere fear sweeps my head clean of every thought. . . . 'The Secret Agent' may be pronounced by now an honourable failure. It brought me neither love nor promise of literary success . . . I suppose there is something in me that is unsympathetic to the general public, — because the novels of Hardy, for instance, are generally tragic enough and gloomily written too, — and yet they have sold in their time and are selling to the present day. Foreignness, I suppose."

It is not quite explicable why "The Secret Agent" and the much richer "Under Western Eyes" did not find a larger public, for they are, if nothing more, exciting melodramas. Conrad, like every romantic, had in him a strong vein of the melodramatic, which of course he did not allow himself to cheapen or abuse. The appeal to Hardy suggests to any critical reader an important difference. The Conradian method — not always the same in all the stories — is adroit and beautiful; the more you study it, or the more you lend yourself to its magic without any conscious study, the more its power and fineness grow upon you. But it is sometimes a little baffling, slow in getting under way. Whereas Hardy is a born popular story-teller, working usually on an accepted conventional plan, no matter how startlingly original his substance, how terrible and forbidding his theme. His stories "go", all of them from "Far From the Madding Crowd" to "Jude". One quality these two dissimilar masters have in common: immense pity for suffering, and, on the whole, brave mankind. And another: a fatalistic view of human character and the inscrutable god of Chance. And still another: unshakable integrity and will to tell the truth about people, what we have to call (to use a word that is getting tiresome, though Conrad often uses it in his letters and notes) "psychological" insight.

Conrad says that he is not a critic. But

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he is. A sensitive, analytical mind like his could not fail to be critical. He is a shrewd and exacting judge of his own work. And his few brief literary papers on James, Maupassant, Cooper, and his comments in letters to his contemporaries, warmed but not distorted by friendship, are penetrating, just, revealing his own artistic ideals in a casual unassuming manner. His letters to H. G. Wells estimate exactly the qualities of that somewhat kindred romancer. His epithet for Wells is ultimate: "Realist of the Fantastic". Nothing better was ever said about Wells than this: "You contrive to give over humanity into the clutches of the Impossible and yet manage to keep it down (or up) to its humanity, to its flesh, blood, sorrow, folly . . . the cunning method of your logic. It is masterly — it is ironic — it is very relentless — and it is very true . . . your diabolical psychology plants its points right into a man's bowels. To me 'The War of the Worlds' has less of that sinister air of truth that arrests the reader in reflexion at the turn of the page so often in 'The Invisible Man'. In reading this last, one is touched by the anguish of it as by something that any day may happen to oneself".

Galsworthy, Conrad's oldest friend among English men of letters, to whom he wrote more often than to any other correspondent, he admired this side idolatry. Some of his remarks on Galsworthy's novels are keen and final, not all affectionate praise: "You want more scepticism at the very foundation of your work. Scepticism, the tonic of minds, the tonic of life, the agent of truth, — the way of art and salvation. . . . There is exquisite atmosphere in your tales. What they want now is more air". On Arnold Bennett's limitation he puts a sure finger, apropos of "A Man From The North": "You stop just short of being absolutely real because you are faithful to your dogmas of realism. Now realism in art will never approach reality. And your art, your gift, should be put to the service of a larger and freer faith".

Realism and reality. A larger and freer faith. Conrad's own genius is its miraculous blending of romance and reality, of vision and fact, of intelligent sceptical observation and belief, faith, fidelity to the secret, never quite discoverable, soul of life. He respected facts rigidly as one who has kept a seaman's log and knows that it is impossible to navigate on sea or land, in any storm or calm of life, without correct information. Then the artist sees through that information to the inner meanings, to find bearings and direction, the course of human destiny. But he has said it for himself better than any one else can say it about him, in the Preface to "The Nigger of the Narcissus":

"It is only through complete, unswerving devotion to the perfect blending of form and substance; it is only through an unremitting never-discouraged care for the shape and ring of sentences that an approach can be made to plasticity, to colour, and that the light of magic suggestiveness may be brought to play for an evanescent instant over the commonplace surface of words. . . . The sincere endeavour to accomplish that creative task . . . is the only valid justification for the worker in prose. And if his conscience is clear, his answer to those who in the fulness of a wisdom which looks for immediate profit, demand specifically to be edified, consoled, amused; who demand to be promptly improved, or encouraged, or frightened, or shocked, or charmed, must run thus: — My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel — it is, before all, to make you *see*. That — and no more, and it is everything. If I succeed, you shall find there according to your deserts: encouragement, consolation, fear, charm — all you demand — and, perhaps, also that glimpse of truth for which you have forgotten to ask."

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OUR MODERN DICTATORSHIPS

By Foster Rhea Dulles

ALTHOUGH less than ten years ago a war "to make the world safe for democracy" was brought to a victorious conclusion, the practice of popular government has never been flouted so ruthlessly nor its principles regarded with such scepticism as is the case today. For out of the war and its tragic aftermath of social and economic bankruptcy have been born two powerful dictatorships which deny democracy with a brutal frankness which neither the Kaiser nor the Czar would ever have dared to adopt. In many ways strangely analogous, in other ways at the opposite poles of political thought, Fascism and Communism constitute two absorbing and highly controversial problems of world importance.

It is a curious phenomenon that the dictatorship of Mussolini wins Anglo-Saxon converts who would never tolerate such an abrogation of personal liberty in their own countries. In general their approval seems to be based upon such consideration as an improved railway service, on the theory that Italians, despite Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi, are not particularly interested in personal freedom or civil rights. This at least is the impression which one gains from Sir Frank Fox's *Italy Today* (Dodd, Mead, $4.00). The author has bowed down before the gods of efficiency and finding Italy free from many of the petty ills of democratic countries has become a strong supporter of the Duce. The dictatorship's five years of existence proves to Sir Frank that popular government is no longer the only possible government "for a proud and intelligent people", and with great ingeniousness he proceeds to dissipate the world's misgivings as to the future course of Fascism. He believes that Italy's surplus population may be cared for by economic improvements at home, development of her barren colonies, and by emigration. Subsequently he does not think that "there is the slightest danger to the peace of Europe" in the demographic problem. And of Fascism after the death of Mussolini he is equally optimistic, believing that the dictator may safely pass on his power to an "adopted successor".

It cannot be said that this book adds very greatly to our knowledge of Italy today, based as it is upon casual visits to that country and apparently avid perusal of campaign literature given to the author by the dictator himself. It rather records Sir Frank's own conversion to Fascism.

Of quite a different type is H. Nelson Gay's *Strenuous Italy* (Houghton Mifflin, $3.00). Here is a man who really knows and understands Fascism and yet, like the author of "Italy Today", is still its warm advocate. It is his thesis that Mussolini has brought new vigor to the Italian race, that there is progress on every hand, that the population is constantly increasing — "let us multiply", says the Duce — and that Italy has every right to that place in the sun which she is demanding. Quite the opposite of Sir Frank Fox, however, he is convinced that Italy's demographic problem will force the country into war if something is not done about it. But it is Italy's future rather than the peace of the world with which he is chiefly concerned. His book is a frank avowal of much that the enemies of Fascism have said of the future results of Mussolini's course. It is a vigorous exposition of Italy's need for expansion, her determination to expand, and her inherent right to expand. His conclusion is clear that unless Italy's aspirations are satisfied peacefully, then — war. This is plain speaking.

Still another rapt disciple of the Duce is Miss Jeanne Bordeux, who writes engagingly on *Benito Mussolini — the Man* (Doran, $5.00) in what the jacket terms "a gripping chronicle of strength". It is at least a new rôle in which she casts her hero, although we suspect that her study is based

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not so much upon an appreciation of the political tenets of Fascism as upon her surrender to the fatal fascination which she tells us Mussolini has for all women.

Like a voice crying in the wilderness after these panegyrics on Fascism comes Francesco Nitti's *Bolshevism, Fascism and Democracy* (Macmillan, $2.75). This liberal statesman, once prime minister of Italy, zealously clings to his ideals and asserts that even for Italians there is value in liberty and personal freedom and civil rights. His opinions are very definite and it is not for lack of re-assertion that the reader will fail to understand that Bolshevism and Fascism are a total negation of freedom and democracy, that this negation "is an attempt to revert to the past, the moral code of force, the principle of dictatorship; it can only result in oppression and war", and that Europe can be saved only by a policy of peace and freedom.

In his comparison of Fascism and Bolshevism it is Fascism which comes off far worse. There is an idea behind the Communist dictatorship, says this Italian patriot, and it is an important fact in world history, but the Italian reaction "is a mere incident to be recorded, for no ideal inspires it and it rests upon nothing but violence". He is confident, however, that both Bolshevism and Fascism are isolated phenomena which will neither find imitators nor endure. It is an encouraging point of view.

Turning to Communism we find in *Rasputin*, by Prince Felix Youssoupoff (Dial Press, $5.00), an account of the "Rasputinism" which the Prince considers the forerunner of Bolshevism — both "moral perversions". But his book is of no real value as a study of the influence of that ignorant, fanatical and infamous Siberian peasant upon the ill-fated Russian court; its interest lies in the thrilling account of Rasputin's assassination by the royal assassin himself. The two chapters on the *Starets'* death are pure drama. Prince Youssoupoff could not kill his victim. For two hours he sat and watched him taking poison without effect. He shot him through the heart, but after being left for dead the monk. . . . But this is a shilling shocker and the assassin has told his story graphically, leaving full play to a dramatic imagination.

A somewhat fuller idea of the development of Communism is to be found in *The Catastrophe* (Appleton, $3.00), which is the story of the Russian Revolution by Alexander F. Kerensky. It is an account of his own rôle in that revolution and, while it naturally does not give us a well-rounded picture of the momentous events of 1917, it is extremely interesting as a study of the actions and reactions of the head of the Provisional Government.

It quite clearly shows that Kerensky, steering a difficult middle course with rebellions to right of him, rebellions to left of him, was not capable of meeting the crisis he was called upon to face. In writing of the early parleys between the Duma and the Petrograd Soviet, which were wielding divided power, he says: "On the rare occasions when I was present I sat quite passive and hardly listened". At another time he speaks of an important, vital decision which "ripened somehow of itself", and then tells us that when he asked the Council of the Republic for full powers to act against the Bolsheviks he did not wait for its final vote. These are not the marks of real statesmanship, and however much we may sympathize with his pathetic attempts to revitalize the Russian armies and to bring some order out of chaos, we cannot escape the impression that he was an eloquent, well-meaning lawyer who could not play the rôle to which history assigned him. But his book is an honest account of what he tried to do, and whether anyone could have done more is another question.

Which leads to the present Communist dictatorship. What is happening in Russia today, under what conditions of life the Russian people are actually living, are questions so enmeshed in propaganda and partisanship that it is more than time that some such serious study of the whole situation should be made as that which has been undertaken in the Vanguard Series (Vanguard Press, $.50 each). These little books which record the foreign policy, the political structure, the religion, the village life and the economic organization of Soviet Russia

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perform a most useful function. They are written from a sympathetic point of view but are not wildly partisan. They bear the stamp of undoubted authenticity. They may be recommended without reservation to anyone anxious to get some idea of just what the Communist experiment means.

Perhaps the most interesting and best written of these five studies is *How the Soviets Work*, by H. N. Brailsford. What he brings out above all else is the necessity of judging the Soviet system in the light of pre-war conditions and Russian temperament. He does not pretend to deny that Communist rule is an absolute dictatorship which is based upon the support of a single, disciplined Communist Party — numbering 684,824 members — but he points out the significant fact that this dictatorship differs from all others in that it is a dictatorship with a passion to educate. In this lies the hope of Russia.

Of R. Page Arnot's *Soviet Russia and Her Neighbors* we cannot be so enthusiastic. He disregards the whole question of the Communistic propaganda of the International. It is dismissed with the explanation that this organization is entirely separate and apart from the Soviet Government. But even if we disregard the fact that the leaders of the Soviet Government, the Communist Party and the International are practically identical, and blindly accept the legalistic theory that they are distinct organizations, it remains nevertheless just as true that the propaganda of the International has influenced the relations of foreign powers to the Soviet Union more than any other one factor. It cannot be ignored in any study of Russia and her neighbors.

The three other volumes which have been issued in this series are *Religion Under the Soviets*, by Julius F. Hecker; *Village Life Under the Soviets*, by Karl Borders; and *The Economic Organization of the Soviet Union*, by Scott Nearing and Jack Hardy. In each case the author knows his subject thoroughly and has brought out important facts little known in this country. There is the statement, for instance, that there is today more lay activity and preaching in the Orthodox Church of Russia, despite the atheistic attitude of the Revolution, than ever before in the church's history; there is an account of the significance of the tractor and of the radio in rural life in Russia, and there is a careful analysis of what the Nep (New Economic Policy) really means. It is only the dictates of space which prevent us from going more thoroughly into these books, for the interest and value of the Vanguard Series demand attention.

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THE BLESSED PARIAH

By Babette Deutsch

THE LETTERS OF VINCENT VAN GOGH TO HIS BROTHER, 1872–1886. *In Two Volumes. Houghton Mifflin. $15.*

'IF the great communistic society is bent on producing art — and the society that does not produce live art is damned — there is one thing, and one only, that it can do. Materially make the life of the artist sufficiently miserable to be unattractive and no one will take to art save those in whom the divine daemon is absolute. For all let there be a choice between a life of dignified, highly-paid, and not over-exacting employment and the despicable life of a vagrant. There can be little doubt about the choice of most, and none about that of a real artist. . . . The artist and the saint . . . do not produce to live — they live to produce. . . . You cannot fit them into the machine, you must make them extraneous to it. You must make pariahs of them, since they are not a part of society but the salt of the earth."

In all of Meier-Graefe's two bulky, meaty, and expensive volumes on the life of Vincent Van Gogh there is no passage that more eloquently summarizes the situation of this painter. He was an indubitable artist; he was also something of a saint; and in spite of his respectable background, he lived and died a pariah. These volumes of his letters to his brother, incomplete and badly rendered though they are in the present translation, ratify this view of the man on almost every page. The letters were published in 1914 by Vincent's sister-in-law, who took upon herself the burden of winning for their author the recognition denied him in his life-time. A third volume, to be translated from the French, would conclude the work, which halts here before Vincent had gone to Arles, where some of his most important pictures were painted. The four hundred and fifty-eight letters published in this book give, nevertheless, a fairly complete portrait of the man, and do not merely lend weight to Meier-Graefe's monumental biography, but prove to be the very substance of which it was written. One need no longer depend on a second-hand account, however admirable, of the artist and the saint who was Vincent: one can come at the man directly.

Van Gogh was always on the side of the poor amateur of art — more briefly and truly, always on the side of the poor. Not that his origins were humble. Among his uncles were a vice-admiral, a wealthy merchant, and three art dealers, one of them a partner in the well known Paris house of Goupil. His father was a clergyman, and his maternal grandfather had the title of "bookbinder to the King".

As a youth, starting his career in the world, Vincent received the assistance of his uncles, and at sixteen found himself at the Hague, a favored employee of the branch of Goupil and Company. A few years later the firm sent him to London, and it was during his stay there that he met his first grief, falling hopelessly in love with the daughter of the curate's widow with whom he boarded. It was about this time that he began to draw, at first perhaps to express his pleasure in a world that held so much loveliness — then to console himself for heartbreak.

Too miserable to be a good salesman, he took his dismissal from Goupil's quietly, and accepted the position of teacher. This proving unsatisfactory, he decided to study for the ministry. At odds with academics in religion as elsewhere, he ended by becoming an evangelist at La Borinage. The Christ-like life he led in this bleak mining district was not to the fancy of his superiors, and for a time he literally became a vagrant. But during his stay at La Borinage he had gone on with sketching, and begun copying some pictures of his worshipped Millet. Again his art saved him when a second failure in love snuffed out the first flicker of a new life.

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His passion, his intensity, made a shattering experience of what to another would have merely been a passing unhappiness. That same passion and intensity were the core of his work thereafter, as they were also the cause of his inability to conform to the standards of the world about him, and the secret of his attitude toward the wretched woman who for a little time gave him animal solace for the indifference of his beloved.

The rest of the chronicle is one of ruthless labor, endless misery, and sublime courage in the race with that hound of Heaven which is the cruel blessing of artists and saints. His letters to his younger brother Theo, who followed him at Goupil's and remained there, testify to the ardor and the agony of the pursuit, as well as to the miracle of devotion between the brothers, without which Vincent might so often have perished.

It is curious to consider that the man whose palette in later years was so brilliant, whose pictures give out such warmth and dazzle, was dedicated to darkness, to distress in almost every form, to the most ascetic poverty, the roughest physical and spiritual hardships. In a letter written in July, 1880, when Van Gogh was making the difficult adjustment from the life of a religious to the life of an artist, he said: "Somebody has followed maybe for a short time a free course at the great University of misery, and has paid attention to the things he sees with his eyes, and hears with his ears, and has thought them over; he, too, will end in believing, and he will perhaps have learned more than he can tell. To try to understand the real significance of what the great artists, the serious masters, tell us in their masterpieces, *that* leads to God". That divine impulse is what Millet represented to him. He described a walk in Drenthe in the Spring, where earth and sky have the quality of infinity: "Horses and men seem no larger than fleas. One is not aware of anything, be it ever so large in itself, one only knows that there is earth and sky. However, in one's quality of a little speck noticing other little specks — leaving the infinite apart — one finds every little speck to be a Millet". In the midst of his bitterest loneliness he writes: "If for a moment I feel rising within me the desire for a life without care, for *prosperity*, each time I go fondly back to the trouble and the cares, to a life full of hardship, and think: it is better so, I learn more from it, it does not degrade me, that is not the road on which one perishes". Though he is often in the greatest misery, as he admits, there is "calm pure harmony and music" within, and that music is the song of sorrow. Books and reality and art are all one to him. And poverty and pain and beauty are one. "Yes, for me, the drama of storm in nature, the drama of sorrow in life, is the most impressive."

There is a singular vigor in his writing, that makes itself felt even through the inadequacies and errors of the translation. Passion and intensity are the essence of the man, and as they show in his relations with people and in his painting, so they show also in his most colloquial and casual utterance. The letters are a treasure to which one returns again and again as their author returned to his Millet, his Rembrandt, his Thomas à Kempis. A passage as fine as it is typical concerns the woman with whom he lived for a time and whom he tried (vainly, as it proved) to bring to a better way of life: "If you only act", he tells her, "so that the children always find in you a mother, though you are but a poor servant, though you are but a poor whore, with all your damned faults you will always in my eyes be *good*". This capacity for seeing goodness, for being, with all *his* "damned faults", good, was at the root of his work. His letters offer a key to eternal values. The road he went, though it leads to the madhouse and the pauper's grave, "that is not the road on which one perishes".

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A Shelf of Recent Books

IT'S THE SAME OLD THEATER

By Montrose J. Moses

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEATRE. *By Allardyce Nicoll. Harcourt, Brace. $10.00.*
A SHORT HISTORY OF THE DRAMA. *By Martha F. Bellinger. Holt. $3.00.*
EPOCH: THE LIFE OF STEELE MACKAYE. *In Two Volumes. By Percy MacKaye. Boni & Liveright. $10.00.*
THE ART OF THEATRE-GOING. *By John Drinkwater. Houghton Mifflin. $3.00.*
UP THE YEARS FROM BLOOMSBURY: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY. *By George Arliss. Little, Brown. $4.00.*

THE drama is being hounded to its original sources. There may be many dead languages, but if the various books on the theater are to be believed, there is no drama and no form of the theater without its live interest for the modern theater-goer. There was a time when we had no adequate translations of any of the great world dramas; there was a time at college when we studied the use of the split infinitive in "Hamlet", without knowing anything about and without caring a tuppence for the apron stage of Shakespeare. But now the Euripides of Gilbert Murray is as popular as Omar was to the languid in the gay nineties, and we can tell you, to the fraction of an inch, the proportions of the theater at Epidauros, of the platform stage and of the tennis court auditorium. Our shelves are groaning beneath copious translation from the Czecho-Slovakian dialects, and we hum with culture when we talk of nationalistic traits in playwrights from Chekhov and Gorki to O'Neill. With such prodigious enthusiasm for the theater, the publishers continue monthly the stream of drama books.

Allardyce Nicoll's "Development of the Theatre", amply illustrated with two hundred and sixty pictures, is a panorama of the theater's progress from age to age. Theater design through the ages has been shaped by social and religious custom, and, in turn, the physical theater has determined somewhat the dramatist's dramatic form. Nicoll's pictorial display is a graphic explanation without words; but, being a profound scholar himself, he gives us the evidence in lucid text and thorough emphasis. His is a book that awakens the dramatic life, that shows us how infinitely close to life, no matter what the year, whether B. C. or A. D. (meaning After Drinkwater), the theater has persistently remained. Somehow you can't down it, nor replace it by any other institution — it's with us to stay, a long line of development from the tribal *vocero*, or chant, to Max Reinhardt's "Midsummer Night's Dream" and Eugene O'Neill's "Lazarus Laughed".

This fact is brought before us vividly in another book, Martha F. Bellinger's "Short History of the Drama", which gives us a comet's glance, eastern and western theaters alike, from the primitive ceremonial to the Now of Broadway, of all that has been done through the theater ages. It is a convenient and fascinating guide, with no pretences to scholarship, but with enthusiasm for the subject. No matter the era, Aristotle and William Winter alike laud the "good old days"; there were drama awards in ancient Greece long before there were Pulitzer prizes. Whether it be a study of the Chinese drama of straight morals or of the American drama of doubtful morals, whether it be Greece invading the theater of Rome, or Russia gripping the theater of New York, the wonderful fact about this thing we call drama is that it has not remained stationary, but has inundated all continents. The little man, Ibsen, in Bergen, Norway, set torpedoes beneath international stages. Nicoll's portfolio is a permanent contribution of sound value; the Bellinger guide fills a popular need.

This work in unearthing the theater points to a perfectly explainable condition. For years we allowed our theatrical sources to be scattered, buried beneath indifference, and our theater fell into the ways of com-

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mercial exploitation. But the Continent broke from the conventional subsidized and traditional theater, and our youthful insurgent groups broke from Broadway — for Broadway theatrically meant the broad United States for many a decade. We began reading the plays no commercial dictator would ever think of producing with his own capital; we began studying scenic design to see whether there was not some means of substituting "mood" for literalness. And we wanted to know about the workable theater through all the generations of its existence. History would explain much, if history could be frankly and fully uncovered. In America we began studying our theater past, and we shuddered over the barren product in the face of such agreeable personality as we found among our actors and our writers. Percy MacKaye's "Epoch" — which reveals in thorough manner the devotion of a son for his father — is the life of Steele MacKaye, but it is more than this. It gives, from copious and authentic data, an entire picture of theatrical condition working against a real genius who offered all that was in him to a theater which, at the time, was not worth the trouble. It was a dense managerial system against which MacKaye worked, and the density was in no way lightened by the Victorian literary fashion of the audiences with their love of romantic unreality. Bronson Howard, Henry DeMille, Steele MacKaye suffered from the dramatic standards of the day, but of the three MacKaye alone had profound vision of an art theater.

And Percy's voluminous two volumes paints for us the artist hero with a mighty *flair*, who opposed all the stodgy artistic subterfuges of his day and generation with a daring sweep of artistic creativeness. Steele MacKaye was a pioneer, born out of season. For he seems to have thought out schemes for most of the revolutionary inventions that have characterized our present day reformation: he experimented with lights, he built double stages, he fore-ran any attempt at the revival of pageantry, he established a school of acting, he brought to his rehearsal work and to his work as a teacher of Delsarte methods all the aesthetic principles which later theorists about stage movement of masses have since put forth as new. I found the "Life of Steele MacKaye" a vivid reflection of an era in the American theater not too thoroughly exploited.

It may be that had audiences received as careful instruction in the "Art of Theatre-Going" as John Drinkwater now gives us in a serious treatise of opera-glass aesthetics, MacKaye would have been better understood. But it has been only within the present century that we have heard of the audience as active and creative rather than as static and receptive, and Mr. Drinkwater outlines with meticulous precision just what the qualifications of a theater-goer should be. That the theater lives on the money of those who, in largest proportions, would fall far below Mr. Drinkwater's superior demands, is the real reason for most of our unintelligent theater today. But I believe that Mr. Drinkwater takes too supercilious a stand on the subject of the critic's function in the theater, even though I am wholeheartedly with him in deploring that real theater criticism has almost entirely disappeared before the popular demand for caustic or agreeable comment. I would hate to apply the term "snobbish" to Drinkwater, who handles his subject with full knowledge but with gloves. He seems to be very superior in his preachments, but he is perfectly right in his persistent warning that theory is one thing and the living theater another. He writes agreeably, though patronizingly and soberly.

I have said that in this renaissance of interest in the theater, we were eager for personality. Perhaps our weakest aspect in theater books has been in the field of biography. The "recollections" have smacked so much of the press-agent, they have hidden so much that we wanted to know, they have repeated so much of the same ground, that we have become wearied of them. There have been the worst of them (I dare not mention) and the fairly better of them, among which we may count George Arliss's reminiscences. These at least were written by him, and such cannot be said for the bulk of those which have come to us within the past five years. Yet here again, even though he has the gift of agreeable narrative, Arliss does not give us

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the complexion of that varied life which, as a distinctive player in our theater existence, he must have lived. There is not the comment on the times, the human estimate of the associations one still revels in when reading the recollections of the old time players, like Ludlow, for instance, or Tyrone Power, whose travels in America as an actor in 1832 read like the journals of an observant, live human being as well as an actor. Biography, when it is biography, is factual where it relates to the theater. But when biography becomes autobiography then we expect the warm equation, we expect the actor to lay aside his mask, and give us freely of his artistic experience. Now and again Mr. Arliss hints at this, but he falls short of a volume that will live, as Jefferson's autobiography will live, or Ellen Terry's vivacious memoirs will live.

After all the facts are accumulated, after all the pictures are looked at, after all the advice is given, and after all the experiences are enumerated — the fundamental theater persists, though the streams of fashions and tastes give way to newer days. The theater of Aristotle, or the theater of Heywood Broun, — it is still the theater.

THE ELUSIVE PAUL JONES

By Don C. Seitz

JOHN PAUL JONES: MAN OF DESTINY. *By Phillips Russell. Brentano. $4.00.*

"O, say have you heard of Paul Jones?"
"O, say have you heard of Paul Jones?"
Old Song.

MR. PHILLIPS RUSSELL is the latest writer to attempt the biographical capture of the elusive John Paul Jones, commodore in the first American navy. Mr. Russell handles a nimble pen, but the alert seaman eludes him, though only by a scant margin. Indeed his is a narrow escape. In this it seems, even when with the immortals, the Commodore must be enjoying his chief delight. According to Mr. Russell: "It was in being pursued that John Paul Jones most enjoyed himself. At such times he proved himself to be a thorough seaman. He liked to linger until almost overhauled and then tack and be off before the wind before the enemy had waked up. Such performances at first gave his crew heart failure, but eventually anchored their confidence in him; and this was never shaken, for though during his madcap career John Paul Jones was many times chased, he was never overtaken and never boarded".

Where facts fail him Mr. Russell surmises. Here in most respects one is inclined to agree with him. John Paul had been in several scrapes that cost sailors their lives. He whipped a surly mulatto in his crew as merchant captains were wont to do in that hard day — and later. The man died some time after and his end was attributed to the well-laid-on stripes. Then to quell a mutiny he ran a man through with his sword. Death resulted. Both of these affairs centered legally at the Island of Tobago. Under the advice of friends the hot young captain took French leave and landed in Virginia, where he had a brother, William, tailoring it at Fredericksburg — a quite natural refuge. He was also a Mason and made the most of it.

From the day of the young man's appointment (he was 29), December 22, 1775, the going is smoother, even though John Adams sturdily maintained that John Manly, not John Paul Jones, hoisted the first flag over an American war vessel. He was placed as a lieutenant under Dudley Saltonstall on the *Alfred*, next became captain of the *Providence*. Thence the tale moves fast. The *Providence*, 12 guns and 70 men went boldly cruising towards Bermuda. Perhaps with the memory of the mulatto in his mind the first act of the captain was to throw the "cat-o'-nine-tails" over the side. That does not mean that there was no discipline aboard ship. Order, cleanliness and the officers ruled, despite the surmise to which Mr. Russell clings and on which the English piled emphasis, that Jones had sailed with a pirate for a year or two, covering a period where our captain again evades pursuit.

Pirate or no, the cruise of six weeks and five days was a success. Three brigs were taken to the southward, when he turned to the north, hurried a bit by the British frigate *Solebay* which got within gunshot but failed to catch the saucy *Providence*. In all seven brigatines, two ships, one sloop and six

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enemy schooners fell into his hands — a pretty bag when all is considered. For this he was given the *Alfred* with the *Hampden* for a consort. Her captain, Hoysted Hacker, spoiled the essay, and greatly annoyed his superior by knocking off the *Hampden's* keel on a rock as they were leaving port. Hacker was given the *Providence* and they started again to saunter off Newfoundland and waylay British commerce. Some valuable captures were made but returning to Boston when out of supplies the captain had to pay off the crews of both vessels from his own pocket, was sued for damages and had the *Alfred* taken away from him! Surely enough for a man of spirit to face all at once!

There was a further interlude of vexation when fate lifted the curtain aside and led him to command the new *Ranger* fitted out at Portsmouth, N. H., and due to sail October 30, 1777, to carry the glorious news of Burgoyne's surrender across the sea. Jones celebrated by making Cato and Scipio, two slave boys of his own, freemen and members of the crew. December 2, 1777, he was able to place his dispatches in the hands of Benjamin Franklin at Paris. How that eminent gentleman made use of them is the story of the success of the Revolution.

Jones had expected a better ship but she was switched away from him and he went back to the *Ranger*. It is needless to repeat the record of his foray around Britain, with the destruction of the *Drake*, the descent upon the Scottish coast and the looting of Earl Selkirk's manse on St. Mary's Isle. Enough to know he startled England as she had not been jarred since Charles V of France landed on her coast in the Hundred Years War.

There followed the battle with the *Serapis*, won with his own consort firing upon him from behind, her captain Pierre Landais — loaned by the French — either losing his head in the excitement or, as some say, deliberately intending to destroy his superior. However it may all be, the world rang with the exploit. Mr. Russell calls the affairs of the *Drake* and the *Serapis* "minor actions". If he gauges them by size and strength, yes; if by results, no. They were instead actions of the first magnitude in the skill and audacity with which they were conducted. Fame makes few mistakes and she has laid her laurels firmly upon the brow of John Paul Jones.

In but one spot in the world did our captain fail to receive his just deserts. That was in the Congress sitting at Philadelphia. It accorded him but one more brief command and left him dancing attendance in Paris until the war was over. He could have hastened the end had he been fittingly employed. The little men were as usual in charge of organized government, and preferred trying to devitalize the big men who were their subordinates instead of making all possible use of their capabilities. Ignored by his adopted country, Jones sold his sword to Catherine of Russia, then hard pressed by the Turks in the Black Sea. She made him Admiral and gave him a fleet. Between stupid Russian commanders and scheming Russian politicians he achieved no success of moment, failed somewhat, and was recalled. Soon he was back in Paris to fall ill and die July 18, 1792. He was but forty-five!

Truly Mr. Russell says he "never lost a battle, yielded in any naval contest or failed in an errand". He could always succeed on the sea; seldom on land. It is hardly possible to agree with the author that he was born too late. Perhaps, rather, he died too soon. The fall of the Bastille was a year ahead of his demise. What might he not have done for Napoleon upon the sea?

He was buried with ceremony though only two Americans attended at the grave. For a century his resting place remained obscure. The cemetery became covered with buildings. With an impulse that should do him lasting honor General Horace Porter, our Ambassador to France, sought to find the body. This he did in 1905 — that is, if it was the body. Here again the captain evades pursuit. The identification rests upon measurements and guess work. The leaden coffin, with its contents preserved in alcohol, was brought here under an escort of warships commanded by Admiral Charles D. Sigsbee of the *Maine*. It rests at Annapolis, in a tomb as magnificent as that of Napoleon in the chapel of the Invalides, where incipient admirals can also view his sword. Surely no

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small ending for a man who proclaimed that when he enlisted on behalf of the Colonies he "stept forth a free citizen of the World!"

Mr. Russell has written well. The breeze is brisk amid his paragraphs. It is not his fault that his subject so often tacks and is "off before the wind".

FAIRY TALES FOR "BUILDERS"

By Bernhard J. Stern

THE BUILDERS OF AMERICA. *By Ellsworth Huntington and Leon F. Whitney. William Morrow. $3.50.*

THE best that the eugenists can produce ought certainly be in this volume. Of the two apostles of the eugenic faith that have collaborated in writing it, the junior author is the paid organizer of the church, the executive secretary of the American Eugenics Society; the senior author — a recent convert to the cause — a Yale professor, well known for his virtuosity in manipulating statistics. Yet they have produced an incredible proselytizing tract, which for sheer puerility and absurdity, for shallowness and fatuousness surpasses the worst of the pseudo-scientific books now on the market. One might well consider the book a series of illustrated fairy tales for none too bright "Builders". The following random sample from a chapter which attributes increasing crime to the differential birth rate of the "higher" and "lower" classes, illustrates the style in which the book is written:

"Now just what kind of a brain commits criminal anti-social or asocial acts? Remember that the mind has two principle functions: to think and to will — the realm of the intellect and the realm of the emotions. These are separate functions but in order to produce good results they must work together. . . . Let us think for a few moments of the mind as a team of horses. Let us call one horse Intellect, and the other Emotion. In a normal man both horses are sturdy and well proportioned. A good harness gives them the same sort of advantage that good training gives a man. Now suppose that Intellect is an old, decrepit grocery-wagon horse, while Emotion is a big well rounded Percheron, full of life and quick to respond. Such a team would pull the load slowly; in other words the person would be feeble-minded. But suppose that Intellect is the big strapping Percheron, well suited to his work, while Emotion is a little, knee-sprung, wind-broken, spavined, sickle-hocked Texas pony. The driver says 'Get up'; maybe the load moves and maybe it does not. . . . These are the conditions that actually confront society with regard to the minds of defectives."

Such is the contribution of the "science" of eugenics which the followers of Saint Francis Galton believe will save civilization from imminent destruction.

From the parable of the queen's garden which sets its intellectual tone until the final chapter which has a characteristic sermonic title, "The Best Is Yet To Be", the book is permeated with a callow, supercilious aristocratic bias. Its dominant theme may be epitomized as being: Cursed be the poor for they shall inherit the earth, for their birthrate is larger than that of the rich. But the poor are not poor because of exploitation under our capitalist economy, which separates the masses from the ownership of the means of production and makes of them industrial serfs. They are poor, according to the authors, because they are biologically incompetent. No objective criteria of competence are presented; status alone is considered an index of ability. Miners are therefore to them a characteristic dysgenic group and the parents of Yale students are representative of the "Builder" type. Class or caste lines are regarded as being correlated with biological differences under this best of all possible economic systems where "human weeds, persons who behave without consideration for the general weal are reversions to a primitive type as far as conscience is concerned" where "slums appear to exist mainly because people are somehow defective" and where lack of capital leading to failure is "generally due to some mistake in running the business, some unwise venture, or some temperamental quality whereby the persons who need capital are unable to persuade others to invest in their enterprise". The substantial old families are only replenished from the "lower" classes after a stringent process of winnowing.

The authors' findings refute some of the unsupported contentions of the earlier mem-

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bers of their faith. They contend, after handling figures with prodigious dexterity that the most successful people at any given social level have the most children. What then is the meaning of all their clamor? "Economic pressure, industrialism, cities, freedom from class distinctions, freedom of divorce, the improvement of public health, the growing desire for self-expression, the cult of feminism, birth control, and various other factors have combined . . . (to bring about a condition in which) the upper classes are rapidly dying out, the lower classes are rapidly increasing." Therefore let the rich prevent extermination by having from four to six children per family, and thus save culture from extinction!

The authors never distinguish between biological and cultural heritage; they seem never to have heard of cultural accumulation, transmission and diffusion independent of particular races and individuals. For example, because a small number of artists, authors, actors, and musicians listed in "Who's Who" have not a large enough birth-rate to maintain their stock "we seem to be headed toward a state of society in which not only are beauty, art and loveliness being destroyed, but in which literature, science and other forms of intellectual effort are fast being degraded or even eliminated. . . . Unless art can be wedded to farming, music to religion, literature to commerce, and engineering to manufacturing, or some such combination, it is hard to see how a great débâcle of civilization — a great return to the Dark Ages — is to be avoided". No attempt is made to show what *gene* in the germ plasm conveys musical, literary or artistic ability. Nor is any suggestion given as to by what alchemy a Picasso can be a farmer as a side line, or how T. S. Eliot and James Joyce can become members of the firm of J. P. Morgan and Company. And the pertinent question remains: Is Bach played today because of his brood of children?

The program of the eugenists when rescued from the verbiage and the muddle-headed conceits of its proponents can hardly provoke antagonism from any intelligent man or woman. Of course it would be a good thing for society if those of culture and education would have large families, though it seems more important that society should afford equal opportunities for culture and education for everyone, not only theoretically but actually. Of course the knowledge of birth control should be disseminated among the masses, not because they are incompetent but because childbirth should be a willed activity for all. It must even be acknowledged that sterilization is a crude expedient but is our only means of coping with certain types of family idiocy until science is able to meet the present distressing situation in a more satisfactory way through a knowledge of the etiology and treatment of the disease. Since these principles are widely accepted, it would be well for the eugenists to cease spoiling the chances for the realization of their program by such absurd books as this. Let them devote their religious zeal to patient scientific investigations in the fields of genetics so that they will have facts not prejudices about heredity. Before these men write again, they ought to learn something about contemporary psychology, physical and cultural anthropology, sociology and economics. Above all they ought to be aware that in reality their creed as they expound it is little more than a badly disguised and poorly constructed buttress for the established order.

AN AMERICAN HERETIC

By Gerald Carson

THE HEART OF THOREAU'S JOURNALS. *Edited by Odell Shepard. Houghton Mifflin. $3.00.*
HENRY THOREAU, THE COSMIC YANKEE. *By J. Brooks Atkinson. Knopf. $2.50.*
WALDEN. *By Henry David Thoreau. With sixteen Woodcuts by Eric Fitch Daglish. Houghton Mifflin. $8.00.*

EVEN in the 1850's, in a civilization still dominated by agrarian philosophy and domestic manufacture, Thoreau was standing athwart the time. He didn't like his world. Against the materialistic economics of his neighbors he cried: "If the getting of our living is not poetic, it is not life but death that we get". In this day of machines and mergers and fierce competition for mass markets, when industrialization has gone so far the times which Thoreau reprobated appear as a pastoral idyll.

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Thoreau has been presented in a bewildering number of characters. His neighbors said he was an indolent crank. H. G. O. Blake, who supervised the appearance of much material from Thoreau's journals in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, created the figure of Thoreau as poet-naturalist and serious scientist. Emerson wrote of Thoreau as a memoirist writes of his friend, and Ellery Channing and B. F. Sanborn, "the last of the Transcendentalists", also interpreted Thoreau from a point nearby, and formalized his thought into teachings. Holmes, Lowell, and J. F. Clarke disparaged Thoreau, and Stevenson, following secondary sources, called him a "skulker". More philosophic, Havelock Ellis describes Thoreau as being "in the noblest sense of the word, a cynic". Norman Foerster considers him a mystic, bent on the mystic's quest for the Ineffable, and others have dealt with him as an anarchist, anti-Puritan, rural Diogenes and Horatian hero, as loafer, prig, and backwoods Pater preaching epicureanism, American style.

The place to find Thoreau is in his journals, for from them, like Emerson, he mined the raw material for his books. But Thoreau's journals come in fourteen volumes and contain, along with all their passages of strength and beauty, myriads of insignificant facts — statistics on snowfall and temperature and tree rings — presented in a purely Department of Commerce style. With the same purpose and the same admirable arrangement followed in 1926 by Bliss Perry in editing "The Heart of Emerson's Journals", Odell Shepard has published in one volume a careful selection from the Journals which gives in brief space the range and vitality and richness of Thoreau's inner life and thought.

With the Journals now accessible, with a new biographer, Mr. J. Brooks Atkinson, pledged to a modern and just interpretation, and with a sumptuous new "Walden" at hand, we have ample facilities for recovering the truth about this loafer-poet-naturalist-heretic-Platonist.

"Thoreau," says Mr. Atkinson, "perceived the general perennial joke of our manner of living. In our relaxed moments, away from the office, most of us take that point of view now and then. To what purpose is this impatient, elbow-shoving scramble day by day, this worry lest someone be running faster; and why do none of us ever quite touch the goal?"

It is natural that a modern biographer should approach this theme. After the Civil War, when the possibilities of expansion were unlimited, a materialistic philosophy was completely satisfying. But now the pioneer has vanished. The land is taken up. The machinery of production has exceeded our capacity to consume, bringing forth modern publicity methods, sales quotas, a wholly new economic theory, a grinding competition of man against man, business against business, industry against industry. And yet we rebel, and rebelling, find Thoreau's sturdy and pugnacious individualism wonderfully attractive. "A man who," says Professor Shepard, "in spite of his many idiosyncracies and his bitter denunciation of much that America now stands for, was still as truly American as Abraham Lincoln, . . . a man who reminds us in many salutary ways of what we have been and must be again if we are to fulfill our national destiny."

Like Ethan Allen, like Franklin — in spite of his policy and success in the great world — like Margaret Fuller and the Abolitionists and the early feminists, Thoreau was clearly in the tradition of the American heretic. By this I do not mean he was a religious heretic — although he was that — or that he was a political or a social heretic — although he was both; I mean he was a true dissenter who hewed to the line of his own thought with independence and steadfastness, saying, "All fear of the world or consequences is swallowed in a manly anxiety to do Truth justice".

Hear him on the economic order:

"We can afford that railroads and all merely material stock should depreciate, for that only compels us to live more simply and economically; but suppose that the value of life itself should be depreciated."

On co-operation:

"Talking with Bellew this evening about Fourierism and communities, I said that I suspected any enterprise in which two were engaged together."

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On conformity:

"I desire that there may be as many different persons in the world as possible; but I would have each one be very careful to find out and pursue *his own* way, and not his father's or his mother's or his neighbor's instead."

Upon putting one's roots deep in native soil:

"If these fields and streams and woods, the phenomena of nature here, and the simple occupations of the inhabitants should cease to interest and inspire me, no culture or wealth would atone for the loss."

A church notice:

"Lectured in basement (vestry) of the orthodox church, and I trust helped to undermine it."

Many French writers with a sophisticated Gallic taste for simplicity have studied Thoreau as a natural man, a naïve forest philosopher whom they have seen somewhat unsteadily through their Rousseau. As a matter of fact Thoreau was not wholly unlettered. He was a master of Latin, Greek and French. He knew his way around in German and Italian and Spanish, and possessed a library of several hundred volumes. In spite of the unpretentiousness of his learning, he undoubtedly had a scholarly foundation roughly equivalent to that of a well prepared candidate for the modern doctorate.

Thoreau's approach to nature is not the one made familiar to us through early nineteenth century poetry. Nature worship as a cult or movement, or, as we now see it in the summer time, a national migration, would have received scant courtesy from the man who spoke in his journal of "the mealy-mouthed enthusiasm of the lover of nature". Just as too much has been made of "Walden" as a book about social and economic experiment — which it is not — it is easy to fall into the error of supposing that Thoreau would foist nature upon his contemporaries as a spiritual panacea. As a matter of fact objection may be entered under the head of character: Thoreau was not capable of an objective so social. His study was first himself, and then nature only because it was important to him.

Always there is a humanistic quality in his approach to nature:

"I am not interested in mere phenomena though it were the explosion of a planet, only as it may have lain in the experience of a human being."

"Nature must be viewed humanly to be viewed at all: that is, her scenes must be associated with humane affections, such as are associated with one's native place, for instance. She is most significant to a lover. A lover of Nature is pre-eminently a lover of man. If I have no friend, what is Nature to me? She ceases to be morally significant."

Thoreau was a good Platonist. "I find the actual to be far less real to me than the imagined." Yet it is a part of his paradoxical nature that he should have been enamoured of fact, too; but always this "cosmic Yankee", as Mr. Atkinson calls him, searched behind phenomena for the "higher law", and never doubted that all facts have meaning. "I am eager to report the glory of the universe," he cried. And a generation much in doubt about glory, and about the universe too, listens wistfully.

AN UNSENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

By Lawrence S. Morris

NOTHING BUT THE EARTH. *By Paul Morand. Translated by Lewis Galantière. McBride. $3.00.*

"NOTHING But the Earth" is a series of travel sketches, but the reader who has been deceived too often by the bright covers of travel books need not shy at this news. He can trust M. Morand not to bore him. It is true that much of the material here has been written about before, but M. Morand composes his travel notes with the adroitness of fiction, just as his fiction has always had the background of travel.

Readers who are already familiar with his sophisticated short stories will not be surprised to find themselves, in the present book, surveying Asia through the same indulgently ironic eyes which played over post-war Europe from Stamboul to Scandinavia. "The frightful beauty of our age,"

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says M. Morand in his introductory chapter, "is that in it races have mingled without understanding one another. . . . What a way we have come since the Pythagoreans, whose theory that world meant order . . . had a moment of general acceptance!" Today world means chaos and threats. And when the West has introduced enough sanitation into Asia to combat its plagues and epidemics, we may expect the roof of the world to overflow once more, and the human species to be inundated in a war of races.

Thus M. Morand's travels have convinced him that mankind is in an ugly situation; but since he considers that nothing can prevent the approaching catastrophe, he declines to take it seriously. Life is "impossible", and so, without hope of satisfaction, he will take what pleasure he can in watching it grow more impossible. He journeys from one continent to another and records his progress in brilliant pictures of decay. "Nothing But the Earth" follows the path of his voyage around the globe, from France to Siam, by way of America; and from Siam to France, by way of Suez.

The places visited on the way out, in Japan, China and the Straits, he dispatches with caustic vignettes. He leads you into the prettiest little courtyard in Pekin, only to people it with exiles talking gossip and the rate of exchange. He pictures the European and the Chinese trading opium for alcohol. He glances at the ferocity of deep sea life in the tropics, and introduces you to an American in Singapore who is capturing panthers and gorillas for circuses at home. But all of this is only by way of getting you to Siam.

The little isolated monarchy of Siam was, until a year or two ago, an echo of the older tradition of order and understanding. In spite of its mud, its toads and its bad smells, M. Morand found it lightened by a love of flowers and simple manners. The account of it, which fills about a third of his book, is written with tender charm. He describes its rice fields, its miraculous catches of fish, its temples, its monks who share the lay life of the people, its concubines and its sacred dances. It is in the dances that he finds the most perfect relic of a culture which still assumed an underlying order in life.

"They (the two performers) dance side by side, or facing one another, or back to back in a retarded rhythm like nothing we know in Europe, and their art is a succession of plastic poses melting into one another by changes of posture whose equilibrium is profoundly studied. None of the Western vulgarity of smiles, flutterings, loss of balance, and winks towards the stage boxes. Flexing of the thighs, splits, diagonal crossing of the feet; naked, exquisite feet marking the beat flatly, showing now the heel and now the toe, put down on the ground with more precaution than on a sheet of burning metal. . . . And the poses continue without ever an emphatic expression on those immobile faces. . . ."

Our modern world has made a fetish of personality and its reward is chaos; the tradition of these dances made the person merely the vehicle of their meaning. But this tradition is vanishing, even in Siam. The masters are dying off and the pupils will no longer undergo the stern discipline. The reader who has been tempted by this vision of serenity need not plan to catch the next boat for Bangkok. Railroads are already reaching in there from two directions; the Chinese, the Indo-Chinese, Americans and Europeans, hating each other and despising the natives, are crowding in, stirring up the mud and stepping on the toads. The idyll is finished, Siam is being sucked into the general chaos. M. Morand smiles regretfully and leaves.

His journey homeward takes him into equatorial forests, where destruction follows close on generation, and through the Indian Ocean to the coast of Africa, where returning colonials ceremoniously drown their melancholy in the form of a paper spider.

The scenes with which M. Morand has pictured a disintegrating world are drawn as deftly as a cat picks its way through tall grass; and Mr. Galantière has given a distinguished translation to an elusive text. The reader may begin the book with assurance that he will enjoy its nicety of skill; and with the warning that he will close it, despite its apparent lightness, in an unresolved mood of futility, which M. Morand is a subtle necromancer in evoking.

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A ROGUE'S GALLERY

By Edward Hale Bierstadt

CRIMES IN HIGH LIFE. *By Horace Wyndham. Dodd, Mead. $5.00.*
TWENTIETH CENTURY CRIMES. *By Frederick Mackenzie. Little, Brown. $3.00.*
HANDS UP! *By A. B. Macdonald. Bobbs, Merrill. $3.00.*
MEMOIRS OF THE BASTILLE. *By Latude and Linguet. Brentano. $4.00.*
CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN THE XXTH CENTURY. *By E. Roy Calvert. Putnam. $2.00.*
HISTORICAL TRIALS. *By Sir John Macdonnell. Oxford. $6.00.*
SOME ROGUES AND VAGABONDS OF DICKENS. *By Walter Dexter. Lippincott. $5.00.*
THE REBEL EARL. *By William Roughead. Dutton. $4.00.*

THE history of crime is the history of the race, and the worth-while book on crime will contrive to picture the men and manners of the past as an essential background for the particular case under discussion. "Crimes In High Life" fulfills this requirement. Horace Wyndham is an old hand at this game and he can be trusted to bring out its fine points. The sixteen studies that comprise this book are confined to England, and go back no further than the late 17th Century. It is a curious and fascinating gallery. Colonel Blood, who stole the crown jewels of England from the Tower, is an old friend, and so are cruel Governor Wall and good Queen Caroline. Most of the other actors are less familiar. The strange case of the Baron de Vidil, tried for a murderous attack on his own son, rubs elbows with that of the fair and frail Lady Ellenborough whose amorous propensities brought her into court. (The picture of Prince Schwarzenberg lacing the lady's stays will remain with me always.) All sixteen are well worth reading. The selection is good; the research is good; the writing is good.

"Twentieth Century Crimes" makes no attempt to give a survey of twentieth century crime. It is composed of eight cases, concerning only two of which the author appears to have any special knowledge or information. These two are to be found in the chapters dealing with the murder of Rasputin and with the slaughter of the Czar and his family. The story of Rasputin is well told, and one is able to catch lightning-like glimpses of that strange melodrama, the climax of which came, sadly enough, too late. The death of the royal family cannot be read without a sickened shudder, but it is worth reading. With these two chapters the interest of the book ends.

Personally, I find "Hands Up!" a most reassuring volume. The source of the material is Fred E. Sutton, one time known as "The Crooked S Kid", and the story is told through his mouth. I find it excellent. The period covered is approximately the quarter-century from 1865 to 1890, for the true bad man of the great open spaces seems to have been distinctly a product of the aftermath of the Civil War. It was a great opportunity for the natural killer, and the natural killer was quick to take advantage of it. There is the material for an epic in this book.

"Despotism Unmasked" by Latude, and "Memoirs of the Bastille" by Linguet have been famous for many years and we find them here combined under the title of the latter. Prefacing the two accounts is a most readable introduction by J. Mills Whitham. Latude was an utter scamp but, according to his own account, at least, which is partially substantiated by Mr. Whitham, he was a most amazing person. For hair-raising adventure and for vivid narration he belongs with his peers, Cellini and Casanova. His pictures are highly colored and follow in quick succession — loaded with chains in a dank dungeon, training the rats in his cell to perform for his pleasure, climbing out of the Bastille through a chimney, writing his memorial to the minister on paper of his own making and with pen and ink of his own devising, the flight to Holland and the sorry capture — all these make fine reading and give, too, a remarkable picture of the times. Whatever else he was, Latude was an admirable teller of tales. Beside him Linguet seems a dull fellow, academic, which he really was not, but an exploiter of theories. It was well to include him for the sake of the record, though he can only be read skippingly. But Latude, ah, there was a man — and probably a bad one.

"Capital Punishment in the 20th Century" is immeasurably the best book on the

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subject that I have ever encountered. There are ten short chapters, each summarized at its conclusion, and it is the gist of these summations that I give here. (1) The abolition of capital punishment for crimes other than murder was followed by a decrease in the said crimes. (2) The death penalty is no deterrent to him who murders in a fit of passion, and the deliberate murderer is always sure that he can escape the law. (3) Capital punishment has been abolished already in a large number of countries, and in no single instance is there evidence of any increase in homicide, while in many instances there has been a decided decrease. (4) Capital punishment has a demoralizing effect on the prison population. (5) The publicity attendant upon the execution of a capital sentence is detrimental to public psychology, stimulating imitative crime and encouraging unhealthy sympathy for the murderer. (6) Death is irrevocable; and the law can, and has, erred. (7) Juries dislike to convict when the sentence is death. Hence the percentage of convictions for capital crime is too low. (8) The retributive basis for punishment is unjustifiable in a civilized state. (9) Capital punishment violates the moral sense of the community. (10) The immediate, not the ideal, alternative to capital punishment is a long term of imprisonment. There is not one of these conclusions that cannot be fully substantiated and, indeed, there is not one that is not proved to the hilt in this very book. Mr. Calvert does not by any means merely state his thesis. He backs it with chapter and verse. Statistics and experience alike confirm him, and he offers both in evidence.

The posthumous papers of Sir John Macdonnell, originally delivered as lectures at the University College, London, and now published under the title of "Historical Trials" will be of emphatic interest to every student of criminal jurisprudence. In many ways this is a remarkable collection, and it is to be regretted that lack of space prevents giving the book the thorough analysis it deserves. A little may be said. The eleven trials which are studied are all concerned with persons who were, morally at least, innocent — Socrates, the Knights Templars, Jeanne d'Arc, Giordano Bruno, Mary Queen of Scots, Galileo, Servetus, Katherine of Aragon, Sir Walter Raleigh, the witches, and those who were unfortunate enough to be taken under the *grand jours d'Auvergne*, these last being the only possible exception. It is a strangely interesting and sometimes a depressing galaxy. Man and his laws do not show to advantage in most of these trials. As a short history of men, manners and morals, as a legal study, and simply as a singularly interesting book "Historical Trials" is to be warmly recommended.

Mr. Dexter's collection of wags and scalawags looted from the works of Dickens seems to me unnecessary for those who read Dickens, and for those who don't.

William Roughead seems to be incapable of being dull, no matter what his subject, and "The Rebel Earl and Other Studies" is no exception. Herein is history mixed judiciously with crime. The title-essay is concerned with that Francis Stewart, Earl of Bothwell, who harried the days and harassed the nights of James VI of Scotland — later James I of England — in the effort to clear a path to the throne. The essay is delightful, full of humor and drama. In the wake of Constance Kent comes William Mitchel, the "Tincklarian Doctor" of eighteenth century Edinburgh. The Doctor, so called by himself because he was "a Tincklar, and cures Pans and old Lantrins", was quite the quaintest philosopher and pamphleteer of his day and age. The essay telling of his life and works is excellently done. After this, the two most enjoyable studies are those that tell of the atrocious Haddington murders and of the amazing luck of Adelaide Bartlett, tried and acquitted of the murder of her husband. Born with one of the best names in France, de la Tremouille, Adelaide Blanche married an English provision merchant much older than herself, made a compact with him, at his own request, that their marriage should be strictly Platonic, broke the compact at her own desire, renewed it, and was finally accused of poisoning her husband when he himself decided to throw Plato overboard. Interwoven with this truly astounding tale is that of Adelaide's

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affair with a young minister to whom she had been given by her very singular spouse. Mr. Roughead thinks that Adelaide lied. I differ. Her story was quite too incredible to be anything but true. Anyone who could not think up a more convincing yarn than hers would be half-witted, and that Adelaide was not. For those who like history and for those who enjoy crime, and for everyone who likes a good story well told Mr. Roughead's book will be as great a pleasure as all his others have been.

THE HARD FACTS OF INTERNATIONALISM

By Keith Hutchison

POLITICAL MYTHS AND ECONOMIC REALITIES. *By Francis Delaisi. Viking. $4.00.*

FRANCIS DELAISI is concerned with the dangerous contradictions that threaten the world today. Political man is out of step with economic man. In 1914 the former slipped and his fellow, dragged down with him, is still lame from the fall. Another such accident and neither may be able to rise again.

A few years before the war Norman Angell, in "The Great Illusion", pointed out that as economic life became more and more internationalized, war ceased to be a profitable speculation even for the victors. M. Delaisi has elaborated on this theme with arguments and instances drawn from recent history. His picture of the economic world today, as an organic whole which transcends all national boundaries, is convincing but not exactly original. More interesting is his theory of political myths and the part they play in cementing human societies.

Such myths, he maintains, are created by an expansion of the individual's idea of his own daily life. The national myth, which governs politics today, is agrarian in origin. The small farmer regards his country as he regards his land. It is sacred soil; absolute sovereignty resides in the owners; its fundamental law is *Trespassers will be Prosecuted.* In this lies the sanction for enormous armies, fortress-ringed frontiers, exclusive tariff barriers, and the other appurtenances of modern nationalism. To perpetuate the sacred myth children's text-books are carefully selected and the country is permeated with traditions of racial unity and a superior national culture.

Now this national myth is a good enough basis for a self-supporting society but it fails to meet the realities of an interdependent economic system. The Great War, which sprang from national rivalries, impoverished both victors and vanquished, not only by the physical destruction it caused but by its dislocation of the delicate machinery of international commerce. Unfortunately the Allied statesmen, drunk with victory, contrived to make a peace which left Europe less able than before to grapple with the problems of an international economy. "Only Wilson," says Delaisi, "conceived of a peace of interdependence. He was a great realist. His only fault was that he understood the facts of the situation, whereas the others were still attached to their outworn creeds."

The results of this peace are seen only too clearly in the Europe of today. Yet underneath the jealous conflicts that bar the way to economic prosperity M. Delaisi sees the national myth weakening. One or two big industrial groups have ignored frontiers and made international agreements to pool their resources. The League of Nations, feeble and sometimes reactionary though it is, has lessened the possibility of war. The International Labor Office and the International Chamber of Commerce promise to grow into powerful instruments for economic co-operation. Europe is beginning to think of itself as a unit wondering if political autonomy for each nation cannot be combined with a co-ordination of economic activities. This means a radical break with national traditions that will meet stout resistance. Nevertheless the hard facts are in its favor. Internationalism is no longer an ideal: it has become a necessity.

Although M. Delaisi is speaking mainly of and for Europe this book has its applications for America. Politically the United States retains its isolationalist policy, the fruit of its agrarian past, but in the economic sphere it is drawn more closely to the rest of

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the world every year. The process has been delayed and obscured by the variety and magnitude of its resources. But now the American manufacturer is seeking new markets overseas and the American capitalist investing surplus savings in foreign enterprises. The United States, despite its rejection of foreign entanglements, is involved in an international economy from which it cannot escape. Its citizens, no less than those of European states, would do well to consider a re-orientation of the political ideas of a simpler, localized society. "To conserve," writes Delaisi, "is to evolve; such is the invariable lesson of history."

BURIED MAJESTIES

By Louis Sherwin

FRANCIS JOSEPH, EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA, KING OF HUNGARY. *By Eugene Bagger. Putnam. $5.00.*
KING EDWARD VII, A BIOGRAPHY. *By Sir Sidney Lee. Macmillan. $5.00.*

"WHAT would you expect of Francis Joseph? He is only a sergeant," exclaimed his Empress, than whom no more brilliant and tragic figure ever appeared in the long line of mismated Hapsburg consorts. Decidedly she avenged herself. Her epigram is at once the kindest and the most devastating epitaph that any one could devise for the last of the Caesars.

A sergeant in the uniform of a Field Marshal Commander-in-Chief, a tape-swaddled head clerk with supreme rule over five nations — so Francis Joseph is revealed in Eugene Bagger's absorbing biography. With his nose buried in documents he worked harder to lose province after province than Charlemagne had striven and fought to conquer them.

The loss of Lombardy and Venetia, the defeats at Solferino and Koeniggraetz, the contempt and hatred of his subjects, the estrangement from the Empress Elizabeth, hag-ridden by her mother-in-law and the court party, the tragedy at Mayerling, the expatriation and disappearance of the Archduke Johann Nepomuk were all as inherent in the character of Francis Joseph as though he had brought them about deliberately. Had he any regal traits, any qualities of magnificence on the other side of the balance? Ask the ghost of the Tsar Nicholas I whom the Hapsburg knifed in the back in 1853 as a reward for saving the Austrian Empire in 1849. Consider the fate of General Louis Benedek, whose loyalty drove him, a conscious scapegoat, to the slaughter and disgrace of Koeniggraetz — a loyalty to be requited with the stigma of public repudiation and humiliation.

Such a master, naturally, could not command the services of men with high vision and capacity. All the fabulous capacity of the Hapsburgs for ingratitude was concentrated in Francis Joseph. The fellows who could sell themselves to him were cunning rogues like the Adjutant-General Gruenne, whose grafting and incompetence and hatred of officers who knew their business left the Austrian army an easy mark for Napoleon's troops at Solferino. Gruenne knew his Emperor was at heart nothing but a lieutenant of cavalry and won his confidence with the gossip and anecdotes of the messroom. Later on Taaffe, Francis Joseph's favorite premier, quickly learned how to "reduce every question of government . . . to a document which could be docketed, annotated, disposed of and filed" — the only method by which they could be understood in that bureaucratic mind.

Consider, on the other hand, Edward VII of England, whom sentimental Britons love to call "Edward the Peace-Maker". When he wasn't winning horse races, decorating the foreheads of his loving subjects with horns, fussing over piddling details of etiquette or precedence, or getting jobs for his friends, he was pursuing his insatiable hatred of his Imperial and Royal Nephew.

Fascinating as these two biographies are, they afford gloomy reading for those of us who realize the grotesque and menacing failure of the harlequinade known as Democracy. Neither of these monarchs was lazy or vicious. Francis Joseph devoted intense study to the spacing of buttonholes on officers' tunics. He had the keenest eye for detecting the tiniest irregularity in the parade turnout of the sixth man in the second rank at review, but overlooked the invention of the breechloader which beat his army at

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Koeniggraetz. He was so engrossed in gunpolish that he had no time for cannon.

"He sat at his desk from five in the morning till eight in the evening, expediting documents. . . . Such had been the governmental methods of Philip II of Spain. . . . Nothing escaped his attention, whether it was a big bank that failed in Vienna, a river that broke its dam in a remote corner of Bukovina . . . or a youthful member of the nobility that departed for unknown parts leaving substantial gambling debts at Budapest: Francis Joseph knew all, wanted to know more and demanded what he could do about it."

Here, surely, is a portrait that any stenographer or assistant bookkeeper in any American corporation office could recognize. Withal, a petty tyrant in his own castle, amenable only to the worst influences, particularly that of his mother the Archduchess Sophie. It was Mother's Voice that was mainly responsible for the Concordat with Rome which delivered the subjects into the hands of the priests and made every Viennese policeman a Vatican spy. It was Mother's Voice that drove the Empress, like herself an unbreakable daughter of the Wittelsbachs but unlike herself a woman of keen intelligence and sympathy, out on her restless, interminable travels until Luccheni's file put an end to them.

With reservations I must say that Eugene Bagger has done an enviable job with old Francis Joseph. Here and there I detect the serpent's trail of the Sozial-Demokrat's mind, but on the whole he has subdued conscientiously his tendency to doctrinaire Liberalism. He sheds no new light on the mystery of Mayerling but finds a solution in a theory that must appeal to everybody who knows German psychology. "Rudolf," he says, "knew that suicide was by far the worst blow and greatest disgrace that he could inflict on his father."

The second tome of Sir Sidney Lee's voluminous life of King Edward VII continues the story of his endless feud with the last of the Hohenzollerns. This work suffers, of course, by being an official biography. After all, he was not merely a royal example of *l'homme moyen sensuel*. He was the Great Lover of two generations, a legend throughout two continents, a figure in fact and fable of almost Casanovan magnificence. For details of his adventures in this domain we shall have to wait, no doubt, until many hitherto unpublished memoirs of indiscretion come to light.

For the rest, one has to commend the skill with which Sir Sidney Lee contrived to convey the pettiness, absurdities and weaknesses of the late king between the lines of an elaborate eulogy. Sir Sidney, incidentally, died before he could complete his task, which was finished by his assistant, Mr. F. S. Markham of the University of Oxford and finished very capably.

To literature and science, as Sir Sidney remarked, King Edward VII was impervious. In fact a really educated man would have called him practically illiterate. But his intelligence was infinitely keener than Francis Joseph's and he was immeasurably more humane and sympathetic.

It is interesting to observe how, for all that, his dislike of his bounder nephew blinded him to his country's real interests and brought about that encirclement of Germany which ended in the war. King Edward VII had an influence on British foreign policies quite incommensurate with the shrinking prerogatives of the British Crown. Though he knew less about history than any of his ministers except, perhaps, Lloyd George, he knew more about diplomacy and diplomats. His familiarity with the important men on the continent gave him an advantage over premiers and Foreign Secretaries that he used to the full. Nevertheless when he died he left the power of the crown weaker than when he acceded to the throne. His life affords several questions for speculation. If he had been a real ruler would he have consented to Fisher's harebrained proposal which, for all its preposterousness would undoubtedly have been effective? Could he have postponed the consummation of Democracy that is now devastating England?

A laborious task, this biography will command a place in all libraries. In effect, if not in intent, a sardonic sidelight on what we are pleased to call human progress.

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CERTAIN STORIES OF SOPHISTICATION

By Parker Tyler

WHEN Mr. Norman Douglas wrote "South Wind" fifteen years ago, he created a norm for a certain genre of sophisticated novel. The scene was an island made notorious by the profligate, Tiberius, and the resident colony echoed that tyrant's excesses and obliquities with a frailty which mocked them; nevertheless the more typical members among the inhabitants were shocked and scandalized by it. Mr. Douglas's form in this book was trivial, but it concealed an epic commentary on modern society, signifying a serious protest against its ignorance and hypocrisy. In *Vestal Fire* (Doran, $2.00) Mr. Compton Mackenzie has done the same thing, and with equal brilliance. His method is somewhat more *bravura* than Mr. Douglas's, his canvas, as a character in "South Wind" says of Nepenthe, being overcharged; this is a small mark in form, larger against Mr. Mackenzie than Mr. Douglas; but by the grace of its profusion, one is released in "Vestal Fire" from the chief characteristic of literature, boredom. It should be remembered that it is not an easy or common feat to write as Mr. Mackenzie has written, and, signally, to make the pathos at the end of his book authentic; that demands a divine comprehension of values and a major skill in writing fiction. "Vestal Fire", however, remains chiefly a dense bouquet of the choicest flowers of venom and irregularity; it is, with "South Wind", one of the twin bibles of sophistication, gestures exquisite and, in a manner, completely satisfactory.

Passing on to Mr. Anthony Gibbs's *High Endeavour* (Dial Press, $2.50), one encounters another anisette of the sophisticated brewers, but one written with different purpose. Dickens seems to have assisted in the broad characterization of this comedy, a certain magnification of dimension being effected. In fact, Mr. Gibbs would seem to draw from satirists more serious. His hero is an Oxonian Don Quixote who starts out on a timid search for romance, which is the name given in the twentieth century to self-expression. It occurs to one that he might be intended by Mr. Gibbs to be an indication of a lamentable post-Wilde generation.

Mildred Evans Gilman's *Count Ten* (Boni & Liveright, $2.00) provokes one to think of Mr. Lewis and his "Main Street" and "Elmer Gantry". Miss Gilman's minister, however, is not half so beguiling as Mr. Lewis's, and it is a pity that the Main Street note should be so loud that certain meritorious moments in the book should be completely obscured.

A sad misalliance with the Muse has been formed by Mr. Vernon Bartlett in *Topsy-Turvy* (Houghton Mifflin, $3.00), episodes in the upset of post-war Europe. Mr. Bartlett should have been persuaded not to exchange his journalistic pen for the scalpel of literature. His imaginative power is deficient, so much so that the themes of his stories have the appearance of dredgings from the whole anonymous body of literature. The common man, if he were articulate, might write as Mr. Bartlett writes, grasping truth intuitively but lacking all consciousness of being engaged with a creative art.

What a genuine pleasure it is to pick up Mr. Geoffrey Dennis's *Declaration of Love* (Knopf, $2.50), on account of its exquisite little binding. One looks forward to the contents and is not disappointed in an expectation of novelty, taste and brilliance. Mr. Dennis's book is a love story unsurpassed at once for a curious intensity and an up-to-date modernity. There is managed herein, through the medium of a series of letters, a strange collusion of the sentiments which according to general opinion are not in the conscious control. The gentleman, sexually almost indifferent to the lady, and poignantly aware, indeed, of many of her

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faults, convinces himself by autonomous will that he loves her, and as if responding to a hypnosis, she reciprocates. Mr. Dennis's mannerisms, which he has chosen not to work into the body of a style, are inclined to jar a little, but they contribute ultimately to the effect of unique and passionate sincerity which is found in this little book.

NOVELS OF THE CURRENT SEASON

By Louise Maunsell Field

LIFE as the majority of middle-class people know it, with its frustrations and compensations, its disappointments and satisfactions, is truthfully presented in Ben Ames Williams's chronicle of a newspaper man which he calls *Splendor* (Dutton, $2.50). The narrative covers fifty years, beginning with Henry Beeker's childhood. At fifteen he becomes an office boy on the Boston *Tribune*, and from that time his existence is bound up with that of the paper: "Office boy, reference department, reporter, bicycle editor, copy desk, State House, make-up, copy desk promotion, and back to reference again". Henry ends almost precisely where he began. He had seen visions of himself as a great editor, a world force; he had written short stories and a novel. But no one of his editorials was ever printed, and the short stories and the novel were "returned with thanks". Henry married young; at twenty-five he had the responsibilities of a wife and children, responsibilities which conditioned the rest of his life. All this is told with a perfect verisimilitude; we see Henry's friends and relatives, feel as he did the reverberations of the great events in which he had no share. But what lifts the story above mere photographic accuracy into the realm of beauty is the character of Henry himself. As we travel with him through the fifty years of the narrative, seeing the changing world as he saw it, we learn to love and to respect the outwardly commonplace little man who always found it so much "easier to look ahead".

A changing world is clearly reflected in that history of an English bank and a typical bank clerk of the last century, *Our Mr. Dormer*, by R. H. Mottram (Dial Press, $2.50). Opening in the year 1813, the novel closes in 1920, when the portrait of Our Mr. Dormer is at last removed from the wall of the bank where it had hung so long and is placed in a museum. Narrow, unimaginative and rigid, but loyal, brave and of an unvarying integrity, Our Mr. Dormer typifies the men who planted the great and flourishing tree of the "English Credit System, founded on integrity — on a workaday belief in the genuine character of a promise". It is a social document, this story of the bank founded by a pair of Quaker brothers. For the history of Doughty's Bank is an epitome of much of England's history, the steady expansion of that great web of international credits, whose spinning was to so very great an extent the achievement of the Mr. Dormers. Without dullness or pedantry, with a touch here and a phrase there, Mr. Mottram quietly shows us a century and more, the century in which both the outer material world and the inner one of thought altered more rapidly and more strikingly than in any other period.

But however times and ideas may change, personal relationships remain, to the individual, the most important things in life. *The Casement* (Doran, $2.50), Frank Swinnerton's admirable novel, which, though written some years ago, has only now been published in this country, is a tale exclusively concerned with personal relationships. Loraine Trellas looks at life through the casement of her girlish dreams; when she is summoned to enter life instead of merely surveying it, she hesitates until the opportunity is almost lost. No one can handle this sort of thing with a defter touch than Mr. Swinnerton's. He understands and

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exquisitely reproduces the half-tones, the innumerable delicate shadings, the fluctuating lights which apparently change the colors of that elusive thing which is character. And in this book his men are almost if not quite as well portrayed as his women. The two sisters, Olivia and Loraine — Mr. Swinnerton is fond of drawing sisters — Olivia's husband Robert, and Paul, who had once wanted to marry her, are all real people. Their speech, their inconsistencies, their shifting likes and antagonisms, are portrayed with an artistry which makes this book worthy of its distinguished author.

Lester Cohen has chosen to mould his new novel, *The Great Bear* (Boni & Liveright, $2.50), about a single character, Thane Pardway of the Chicago Wheat Pit. It is a story of the 'Eighties, of feverish speculation and the lust for power. Thane Pardway, huge, brutal, crude, uneducated, is at times a fairly impressive figure. The novel is full of repetitions, Agnes is never more than a shadow, and the plot is poor; but as a study of one aspect of the days when a corner in wheat was the object of many men's ambition, the book is not without interest. May Sinclair too has centered her book about a single character, shown almost exclusively in his relations with the various women who loved him. *The History of Anthony Waring* (Macmillan, $1.50) marks a return on Miss Sinclair's part to the stripping-away method she used so successfully in telling us of Harriet Frean. Anthony's mother, his aunt, his nurse, the girl who jilted him, his mistress, his wife, and the woman who was neither his wife nor his mistress but the one great love of his life — all these, with his reactions to each of them, are set forth in the extremely short novel, which, beginning when Anthony was four, ends with his death some sixty years later.

A promising first novel, Edith M. Stern's book is a study of the dominance of those who hold the *Purse Strings* (Boni & Liveright, $2.00). New York in the past quarter-century provides the stage setting, and the action has to do with the marriage of Stanley Jackson, of cultivated tastes and extremely bad manners, to Ella Martin, whose family had the crudest of tastes and manners no better than Stanley's own. Stanley couldn't make a living because of his "temperament"; he and his wife and daughter were supported by the Martins, with unpleasant results. Another first novel is Lola Jean Simpson's *Back Fire* (Macmillan, $2.50), a mediocre story about a strictly brought-up young woman who wants freedom. Marais is on the verge of running off with one man, though she loves another, but is rescued in the nick of time. *Conflict* (Houghton Mifflin, $2.50), Olive Higgins Prouty's tale of a woman who marries a weakling and later falls in love with a better man, is a dull and rather foolish novel not particularly enlivened by its Freudian trimmings.

Unfamiliar settings are difficult to find, but Eleanor Mercein has discovered a comparatively unused one for *Basquerie* (Harpers, $2.50), a collection of short stories in which the principal character is an American girl who marries a rich Basque. Delightfully told, the tales give fascinating glimpses of all sorts of quaint customs and old world superstitions. Had they no other merit, these tales would be worth reading for the sake of "the Matriarch" and adorable little Bette. Unusual too is *The Place Called Dagon* (Doran, $2.50), Herbert S. Gorman's imaginative tale of a New England valley whose inhabitants were descendants of the Salem witches. Interesting, well done and often effective, the story lacks something of the power which might enable it to win complete if temporary belief, something of the magic with which Algernon Blackwood or Walter de la Mare invest tales of this kind. Old-fashioned romance is almost as rare, these days, as stories of witches and warlocks, but Mrs. Baillie Reynolds has employed all its time-honored properties, from the ancient haunted keep to the beautiful young "wife in name only", to enhance the interest of *The Gift In The Gauntlet* (Doran, $2.00). A complicated plot, a mystery, lovers' misunderstandings, a weird fortune-teller and an old tradition go to make a tale whose dauntless romanticism will be enjoyed by many readers.

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THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

Compiled by Frank Parker Stockbridge, Life Member of the American Library Association, in Co-operation with the Public Libraries of America

The annual crop of prize novels, just harvested, seems to grade a bit higher than previous crops, if the response of the reading public be a fair standard by which to gauge them. And, after all, what other test is there for novels? They are written to be read, and if people don't read them they certainly fail of their prime purpose, however highly the critics may esteem them. This is particularly true of "prize" novels, at least so far as their publishers are concerned. The novelist may, indeed, feel that he or she has achieved his first object, by winning the prize; but the publisher who has awarded his ten thousand dollars or more to the author before a copy is sold must sometimes feel a trifle annoyed if people don't read the book. And the records of this Monthly Score in the past indicate that only a few "prize" novels manage to get themselves so talked about as to send folk scurrying to the Public Library to read them. But last month "The Grandmothers" scored for the first time, and now stands second on the fiction list: and "Jalna" pops up, in a highly creditable position for a book's first appearance in these lists. There are still several other "prize" novels to be heard from, however. — *F. P. S.*

FICTION

1.	A Good Woman	*Louis Bromfield*	STOKES
2.	The Grandmothers	*Glenway Wescott*	HARPER
3.	God and the Groceryman	*Harold Bell Wright*	APPLETON
4.	Barberry Bush	*Kathleen Norris*	DOUBLEDAY
5.	Death Comes for the Archbishop	*Willa Cather*	KNOPF
6.	Lost Ecstasy	*Mary Roberts Rinehart*	DORAN
7.	Jalna *	*Mazo de la Roche*	LITTLE
8.	Wallflowers	*Temple Bailey*	PENN
9.	An American Tragedy	*Theodore Dreiser*	LIVERIGHT
10.	Sorrell and Son	*Warwick Deeping*	KNOPF
11.	Dusty Answer *	*Rosamond Lehmann*	HOLT
12.	Kitty *	*Warwick Deeping*	KNOPF

GENERAL

1.	Trader Horn	*Alfred Aloysius Horn and Ethelreda Lewis*	SIMON
2.	"We"	*Charles Lindbergh*	PUTNAM
3.	The Royal Road to Romance	*Richard Halliburton*	BOBBS
4.	The Glorious Adventure	*Richard Halliburton*	BOBBS
5.	Mother India	*Katherine Mayo*	HARCOURT
6.	Napoleon	*Emil Ludwig*	LIVERIGHT
7.	The Story of Philosophy	*Will Durant*	SIMON
8.	Revolt in the Desert	*T. E. Lawrence*	DORAN
9.	What Can a Man Believe?	*Bruce Barton*	BOBBS
10.	Why We Behave Like Human Beings	*George A. Dorsey*	HARPER
11.	This Believing World	*Lewis Browne*	MACMILLAN
12.	The Man Nobody Knows	*Bruce Barton*	BOBBS

* This title has not previously appeared in the Monthly Score.

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IN BRIEF REVIEW

IN reading the life of *Sir Charles Sedley* (Boni & Liveright, $6.00), one finds reason to wish that Mr. V. De Sola Pinto might have injected some of the "fine racy flavor" he admires so much in Sedley's best play. Surely the biography of a foremost wit of the Restoration ought to be treated with the gusto which "Hazlitt desiderated in all forms of art" and which Mr. Pinto applauds so justly in his subject's "Bellamira, or The Mistress". To appreciate any one of the rollicking, scintillating crew that flashed and sparkled around King Charles II — who, indeed, was the most brilliant of them all — one should approach him in the spirit of that court. Considering the comparative freedom of thought and speech on both sides of the Atlantic today, I can see no excuse save an incurably old-maidish temperament for a deprecatory attitude in such a work.

As a critic Mr. Pinto has not only sound sense but the very necessary aforementioned gusto.

As a biographer, this author is a horse of a different color. He tells you many interesting and highly colored incidents in Sir Charles Sedley's jocund and highly enviable existence. He also contrives many a charming picture of life in and about Charles's London. But he does it with an air of head-shaking and tut-tutting that I, for one, find rather painful.

Sedley, as a matter of fact, was the most amiable and decent of his whole crowd. His pranks — and Mr. Pinto might have admitted it — were those of any healthy, intelligent undergraduate with a good capacity for Sherris and Rackee. He had not any of the ruffianism that sometimes colored the fun of his lusty contemporaries.

Besides his own charm and talents, he had the distinction of being the father of one of the foremost paphians of the day. His only legitimate offspring, she was the Countess of Dorchester, mistress of James II — and others. She was rather a homely wench but apparently of amazing charm and undoubtedly of ruthless wit which Lord Dartmouth characterized as "surprising rather than pleasing, for there was no restraint in what she said of or to anybody".

When Sedley was forty-one the roof of a tennis court collapsed upon him. The effect was not quite like that of the bullet which shattered the knight Inigo Loyola's knee at Pampeluna, but it did achieve a reform. He settled down thereafter to a more or less domestic life. His literary work, I am sorry to say, profited thereby, for it was in the ensuing seven years that he wrote his best play and poetry. And the debates in Parliament were also improved, as Sedley was for thirty-three years one of its most intelligent members.

By appending a list of the books in his library, Mr. Pinto flouts the frequently repeated sneer that the Restoration wits were a superficial, ill-read, smattering lot. Sedley was the friend of Rochester, Shadwell, Montague and "the towering Dryden". His reading was not only wide and liberal but sound in English, Latin, French, Greek and Italian. I know few literati in New York today who could compete with him.

Lyle Saxon sees the Mississippi in a glamor from childhood days when, as a very small boy, he gained his first impression of its stupendous power. His book, *Father Mississippi* (Century, $5.00), opens with a brief episode of the little boy gazing at the river in flood from the safe levee-top while, without understanding why, he knew that it was something to be afraid of. It closes with a long account of the great flood of 1927 — and the river is still something to be afraid of.

This chronicle of the Father of Waters is divided into five main sections. The first is a series of reminiscences of plantation life — and a romantic and exciting life it is to the author as he looks back on it. He

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evokes from the past something of the life's fullness and reality in his sketches on the "aunts" and "uncles" of the plantation, river music, and the mail-boat. This section closes with the tragedy of the crevasse in the great flood of his boyhood when the levees did not hold and, after days and nights of suffering and terror, he looked around on a great waste and saw that the plantation of his childhood no longer existed.

The second, third and fourth parts form a great human history of the river, and give the real body to the book. They tell of the discovery, exploration and settlement, with long extracts from records and diaries of pioneering days — a chronicle of adventure and achievement and often of tragedy. As Americana there is much here of interest and information on these few hundred years of an attempt in civilization. And back of it all the fear of the river makes itself felt through the growth in prosperity — a prosperity which has not yet been strong enough or wise enough to deal adequately with its foe.

This brings the reader to the longest section of the book: "1927". One chapter, a human interest story called "Episode: Down on the Levee", gives a good picture of what the great flood of 1927 was really like. All these chapters are written with a sympathetic appreciation of the problem which is confronting all the dwellers in the Mississippi River valley, a problem which makes them ask if there cannot be some assurance of safety. The author, like others who know the situation today, feels this assurance can be given only if the government of the United States will take over the task of controlling the waters, and it is this note which he stresses through his insistent theme. Perhaps the author is a little too close to his territory to be able to see the problem with detachment in its vastness as an economic problem, and the possibilities of dealing with it as such, but his desire is toward the same end as that seen in the clear and far-reaching views expressed and urged by others during this year — that the Mississippi be made, with enough money and enough comprehension, wholly an aid instead of at times a terrible and too powerful enemy.

Among the Bourbons, the Compte de Province, who was later to be Louis XVIII, stood as the recognized intellectual. In *Louis XVIII*, by J. Lucas Dubreton (Putnam, $3.50), his youthful portraits show him as having been most unlike the sodden, hoggish being his unbridled appetites made of him in maturity. He set his mind early upon attaining the throne, and he could not forgive his sister-in-law Marie Antoinette for bringing a Dauphin into the world. Whether he actively conspired against the royal family and was instrumental in furthering the ambitions of the atrocious Orleans is still a moot question. But the elevation he so eagerly sought was not to come until he had gone through excessive humiliations. Driven out of France, he wandered through Europe, eating the bitter bread of dependence in Russia, in England, in Prussia. Finally the Powers set him on the tottering throne and left him to work out his own salvation. But it was Louis's fate, as it was of all the Bourbons, to surround himself with unscrupulous advisers and to be incapable of giving credence to such counsels as might have saved the day for him. D'Avary, Blacas, Decazes feathered their own nests and left their doting master — who could neither live without a favorite nor retain the affections of a woman — to bewail his blind confidence. Naturally astute and endowed with sense and good judgment, Louis permitted his indolence and greed to lower him to the level of beasts. But this "arm chair king" shines in comparison with his successor, Charles X. For with all his ignoble traits he had at heart the welfare of his people.

Alice Ames Winter in *The Heritage of Women* (Minton, Balch, $3.00) has placed her emphasis upon the historical, rather than the tractarian, aspects of her subject. She depicts in lengthy processional the noteworthy women of the races of Western Europe, from the "Mothers in Israel", Sappho, Aspasia, the Roman Cornelia, Theodora, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Isabella d'Este, Madame de Staël, and George Eliot, down to Susan B. Anthony and Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt. She outlines in brief the

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character of these women, private as well as public. She attempts to estimate their influence upon the life of their times and, more dubiously, upon the future. But she cannily omits to draw any conclusion — save the self-evident one that "this tapestry of the heritage of women is still unfinished".

Mrs. Winter's scholarship is sometimes open to question; save that, in the case of a work so unscholarly in its intention, the question does not seem important enough to put. What is important, however, is the fact that her plan itself is difficult, if not impossible, to follow. Apparently the primary purpose of the book is the glorification of women's age-long achievements. But if so — why the inclusion of Errinna and Peg Woffington and Lydia Maria Child, and the omission of George Sand and Margaret of Navarre?

In spite of the title *Maids of Honour* (Doran, $7.50) which hints of intrigue and pleasant frailties, Lewis Melville has contrived to write a very dull account of the ladies-in-waiting and maids of honor who attended the court of George II. This lack of sprightliness is the more unforgivable when one considers that Mr. Melville had for material such glamorous women as Lady Mary Wortley Montague, the ill-fated Sophia Howe, "sweet Molly Lepell", and Prior's Kitty, the madcap Duchess of Queensberry.

One had reason to expect that Mr. Melville, with his extensive knowledge of the eighteenth century, would give some preliminary background of court life under the stolid Georges, that he would recreate deftly the pattern of pleasures and duties with which the court ladies were engaged. Instead, his book merely consists of a series of brief detached biographies pieced together from contemporary letters and diaries. One feels the lack of any unity or general scheme.

One demands from an author, moreover, some interpretative comment on biographical data. Mr. Melville has contented himself with giving long and frequently contradictory extracts from Hervey's memoirs, or from the spicy letters of Pope and Horace Walpole. He does not summarize their comments on the reigning beauties nor draw from them illuminating conclusions of his own. As a result, in spite of the wealth of documentation, one is left with very little notion of what the maids of honor were really like. Thorough and painstaking Mr. Melville most certainly is, but it remains for another writer with more wit and imagination to give a satisfactory picture of the frivolous, scheming, and sometimes tragic ladies who surrounded Queen Caroline.

The book, *Portraits in Color*, by Mary White Ovington (Viking Press, $2.00), comprises twenty sketches of eminent negroes. Miss Ovington has apparently not meant to advance her chosen twenty as those necessarily most representative of their race, but has selected them, instead, with two qualifications in mind: first, that they should include as wide a range of achievement as possible; second, that they should be drawn from the ranks of her personal acquaintance — portraits from life.

No doubt she has succeeded admirably. Certainly the range of her selection is wide, including as it does "the president of a great university, a consul, a biologist, a would-be founder of an African republic, a negro Luther Burbank, a singer of spirituals, a poet, a fighting doctor, an investigator of lynchings". It is a gallery, indeed, of all the virtues. All the public virtues, that is, of ambition, enterprise, perseverance, courage, and loyalty to race.

The story of Marcus Garvey, the colorful paranoiac, whose delusion of grandeur plunged his people into a fervid program of negro emancipation, stands out like a palm-green oasis in the desert of "success stories". It was a far-flung plan, that of Marcus Garvey, with "Europe for the Europeans, Asia for the Asiatics, and Africa for the Africans" as its slogan. It involved hundreds of thousands of negroes and millions of dollars. It founded a hierarchy of officials under His Highness the Provisional President of Africa, with Knight-Commanders of the Distinguished Order of Ethiopia, and Knight-Commanders of the Sublime Order of the Nile. But it failed.

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The greater part of South America is still in a very backward state economically. This, according to Dr. Shanahan, in his book *South America: an Economic and Regional Geography* (Dutton, $3.75), is only partly due to the immense natural obstacles which have to be overcome. The Spanish occupation retarded development by the way it clung to the coast, by its concentration on the production of precious metals, and by its wholesale destruction of the native population. When the Spanish colonies won their freedom the Monroe doctrine warned Europe to keep off. This discouragement to imperialism also discouraged investments, and, as the United States was fully occupied by its own development, the opening up of South American resources went on rather slowly.

These brakes to economic progress were probably a boon to the southern republics. The Monroe doctrine protected them while they slowly acquired some degree of political stability. And, now that Wall Street is so interested, political stability may protect them from modern interpretations of the Monroe doctrine that have pressed hardly on some of the Central American republics.

Dr. Shanahan's survey of South American resources shows that its economic future for many years lies in raw materials rather than in manufactures. The former it has in abundance, animal, vegetable and mineral, and all vitally important to the rest of the world. The three great republics that are most advanced already export immense quantities to this and other countries. From Chile we get nitrates, copper and other minerals; from Brazil most of our coffee. Argentina is one of the chief caterers to the British table, supplying both grain and meat.

Dr. Shanahan covers the ground very thoroughly. He has general chapters on the physical and climatic characteristics of the continent, the history of European settlement, and communications. These are followed by detailed studies of each geographical region. Primarily intended as a college textbook, his work is well worth the attention of business men, investors in South American securities, and students of international affairs.

FICTION NOTES

IT is no small art which enables Ferenc Molnar in *The Paul Street Boys* (Macy-Masius, $2.00) to do for the reader what the reader finds it so difficult to do for himself: to recapture life-size the highly colored and dramatic, and profoundly serious struggles of his boyhood. Most of us recall our childhood as a sort of hazy playtime. It requires the pen of such a one as Molnar to remind us vividly that we were not playing, but living in earnest. The anthropological author of "Science, the False Messiah" put the matter neatly when he said, "Primitive people do not behave like children, and neither do children". The Paul Street boys do not behave like children. They fight — for a playground, not for a country — but their experiences of patriotism, of private fear and public heroism are quite as genuine as if fifteen years had been added to their ages, and a cause of national moment to their motives. You will smile at the intensely earnest ritual of the Putty Club, and at the Paul Street Army with its thirteen commissioned officers and its single private — but the smile is likely to bring in its wake a twinge of reminiscence. Only once, when little Nemecsek dies of pneumonia from a wetting incurred during his rash defense of his beloved *grund*, does Molnar's art falter on the side of obviousness. One cannot help feeling that he might have trusted us to appreciate the hidden grimness of his tale without that final touch of too-dramatic unreality.

Louis Golding does not vouch for the tale he tells in *The Miracle Boy* (Knopf, $2.50), but presents it as discovered by him with much difficulty from the reticent natives, and as believed in by these half thousand people among whom lived Hugo Harpf and his raven Hans. It is a story full of dark and strange recesses of thought and belief. But once within the book, and surrounded by the strangeness and the charm, one reads for the story and only underneath in one's mind goes on the search for the meaning.

Hugo was an ordinary boy for seventeen years, whittling and dabbling in paints, but always accompanied by his raven Hans,

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and then Oskar Techazy came to the Floriansthal and sent him away to Munich to be educated. One reads of the love of Hugo and little Nanni Tratzl; of Hugo's stay in Munich and his return to find that Nanni and von Felsenburg, the feudal lord of the valley, are lovers; of Hugo's successful attempts to perform miracles that he may regain her love. Rosebushes grow and blossom before her eyes, and the dead come to life. Then the Floriansthalers begin to look upon him as either of the devil or of God. But von Felsenburg brings the idiot Toni to believe that Hugo is a new Christ, and that by Toni's betrayal he will die only to rise again, to be revealed to the villagers as a true son of God. Hugo is killed. But he does not rise again.

Apart from the characters, in whom one thoroughly believes, there is a quality here easily called atmosphere, which is something more than that — a real understanding of setting as related to character, and especially of this setting where elemental forces and mysterious undercurrents so strongly show their power. Take the story as you will, you will not forget it, nor the force of the writer's penetrating imagination, working toward reality.

The collection of gently ironic sketches in *Stuffed Peacocks*, by Emily Clark (Knopf, $2.50), is held together as if by a dusty, faded ribbon — a remembrance of a past which to its people is so romantic that no further efforts to think, feel or act in the present are necessary. The characters are a part of the background, and could have no existence apart from it. Some of these sketches approach the short story, as "Cloud-Capp'd Towers" and "Chocolate Sponge"; some, as the first one on Richmond, are simply descriptive, but it is description that is analysis; some are, in briefly sketched types, suggestions of a whole half-dead-and-alive civilization, as in the title story. Written excellently, these sketches in brief, fine outlines show a futile and pathetically pretentious attempt to exist in sentimental pride of the past — an existence that is not life, but a dry rot.

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Only rarely does the pattern in Mary Borden's *Flamingo* (Doubleday, Page, $2.50) stand out with beauty and effect. Against the city background two sets of characters are drawn together briefly for the working out of their destiny, only to leave the reader with a sense of futility. The best effect in the book is the short story of Peter's simple-minded brother and his mother, strong and aloof, living in historic Campbelltown, where Peter goes sometimes for rest and relief from the maddening, insistent, driving city. The truth is that Peter is not unique and the other characters are only occasionally individual and lifelike. As for the wonder of this strangely moving, soaring city, which is really the main character of the book — there is a great deal of talk about it, but the vitality and fascination of its personality is not overpoweringly present.

Never has a more solemn gentleman had himself swept into adventure than Edmund Falconer in Ellis Middleton's *The King's Pleasure* (Dial Press, $2.00). This young man goes from America to the court of Charles II to ask for the return of his property, and finds himself sent instead on a delicate diplomatic mission of amour. In the ensuing events Mr. Falconer never once injures his proud dignity by the indiscretion of a sense of humor, and the lady of his heart proves only a shade less adaptable. The dignity of this pair, however, is somewhat atoned for by the presence in the story of Major Samson Christopher Asquith Sykes, who is something of a clown, and Mistress Nell Gwyn, who is here in her rôle of delightful courtesan. The four of them produce an unobtrusive tale of historical adventure which is as seventeenth century in the precision of its style as it is in the hose and doublets of its characters.

The southern mountaineers have not for nothing been called "our contemporary ancestors". They are as un-modern as any group of people to be found in this country. In *The Lonesome Road* (Little, Brown, $2.00) the author, Lucy Furman, tells of these people with realism and indulgent understanding. The plot concerns the Jonathan-and-David friendship of two mountain boys and of its weathering the storms encountered when a girl enters in. If there is sometimes a softness of sentiment in connection with this story, it is relieved by the excellent picturing of the mountain temperament, particularly the very personal, very demanding religion of these people — a religion which considers the future welfare of one's immortal soul of far more consequence than any earthly comfort. In fact, the stern stuff of moral certainty is an insistent undertone throughout the book, and there are occasional doubts as to whether the author has sufficiently maintained an objective attitude in reference to it. There is a raciness of dialect and temperament, however, and a dramatic intensity in the story, which save the book from rigidity on the one hand and sentimentality on the other.

The alternate choice in the recent Dodd, Mead Prize Novel Contest was *Hubble-Bubble*, by Margaret Bell ($2.50), a book about social and political intrigue at Washington. It is a disillusioned picture of crowds and crowd mentality, it shows an appreciation of subtleties and situations, but it has neither the structure nor the firmness necessary in a novel of the first rank. There is a softness in treatment which is not quite atoned for by its sincerity. Sylvia Wentworth, the wife of the youngest representative in Washington, watches her husband slip hopelessly into the publicity-seeking, self-serving trend at the Capitol, and watches him also fall under the spell of the beautiful Madame Mojesco. For her own part, Sylvia manages to keep her sense of proportion and she finds a friend in Cyril, of the British Embassy. The relations of these four, and their individual relations to Washington constitute the story. It is easy to read, but it seems as if it were also easy to write.

When an author takes for his leading character a girl who is a stupid, unattractive, pathological liar, and makes a book about her which is worth reading, he is entitled to feel that he has done rather well. *Here We Ride*, by Anthony Bertram (Doran, $2.50)

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is a good example. The girl is utterly stupid and brimming with complexes she doesn't understand. To hide the lack of romance in her life she lies constantly and doggedly about her "boys". Everything that happens to her is translated into fiction, either for self-defence or because of her insatiable romanticism. The author has been firm in his attitude and has not once softened the contour to make her a heroine. He has, however, given a reader something to think about. The gilded self-deceit of this little milliner's assistant, her attempts to construe appearances to better advantage, are qualities not restricted to persons of her mental caliber. She is an irritating person, but she is not easy to forget. Mr. Bertram is a realist, which often means only an accurate observer of unpleasant things and something of a cynic. In this case it means also a good novelist.

The Wall of Glass follows the fortunes of a number of young persons who have "deserted their own class" to promote the cause of the workers. The story flows through several channels and the authoress, at first, evidently has difficulty in deciding which is the main stream. She is dangerously near getting bogged, until, in the second half of the book, she isolates Nicholas Calcott and Joan Hoyle in a dirty industrial town. An election is in process in which Nicholas carries the Labor banner. Mrs. Williams-Ellis now takes a firm hold of the story. She gives a faithful and at times exciting picture of a British political battle. We feel the fervor of the mass-meeting, the discouragement that follows an exhausting day of canvassing, the tenseness of those interminable hours when the ballots are being counted. Amidst it all the forceful Nicholas and the dreamy Joan are both struggling to discover the true meaning of their conflicting emotions. In the end the triumph of love is made clear, although the victory of Labor remains doubtful.

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The BOOK MART

THIS is a good time to buy books. Of course, any time is a good time to buy a book, but now that the Christmas rush is over — for which many a tired book salesman is uttering fervent thanks to his Deity — the bookstores are filled with bargains. A lull in the auction season and a digression from the regular trade to books which are supposed particularly to pertain to the Christmas season affords the booksellers an opportunity to clear their shelves of last month's best sellers and prepare for the next month's best sellers. The wise buyer of books knows that the time to buy is when the trade is supposed to fall off, and the larger the number of wise buyers the less the trade falls off. Publishers keep on turning out new books, whatever the weather conditions, and those who are willing to travel in the latter half of the procession and do not aspire to get the new books while they are still in swaddling clothes can do no better than to spend their spare time in the bookshops, picking up the things that were so hard to get yesterday and which are accessible on the clearance counters today. So the retail trade continues in a healthy condition and looks ahead to a Happy New Year.

The rare book market, not only in New York, but in the uttermost parts of the country, has been stirred by the changes which have come in the book auction business in New York, which is the leading book market of the world today. The absorption of the rare book and print department of the American Art Association by the Anderson Galleries has created in some minds the fear that a monopoly was being built up which would be bad for the buyers and sellers of books. So far, however, nothing very serious seems to have happened. While the two institutions, under one ownership, have been going along about as usual, the collectors of rare books, who in the end are the ones to be most affected, seem also to have gone on about as usual, and continue to pay high prices for the great rarities and low prices for the "rarities" which are merely second-hand books. For the first half of the present season, auction prices seem to have been maintained about as in the past, and there are neither signs of a slump nor a boom. Monopoly or not, the average book collector is no fool. So long as the business is conducted fairly toward seller and buyer, it will be prosperous. No one but the book auctioneer himself can dig the grave of the auction business.

Duplicates and selections from the library of Jerome Kern, the librettist, who has for some years been building up one of the finest private libraries in the country, brought good prices in a sale at the Anderson Galleries. The two outstanding items were copies of the first editions of Gray's "Elegy", 1751, and Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe", 1718–19–20. The former, which was of the first issue and in a fine state, was bought by Charles Sessler of Philadelphia for $4,900, while the Defoe brought $4,200 from the same buyer. One of six known copies of "The Hanging Judge" by Robert Louis Stevenson and Fanny van de Grift (Lloyd Osbourne's copy) went to James F. Drake of New York for $1,250.

While Dr. Rosenbach paid "only" $18,600 for the signature of Button Gwinnett, the Signer of the Declaration, which was in the collection of Charles F. Jenkins, and sold at auction recently, he had previously given the record price of $51,000 for a Gwinnett document signed. However, the price paid does not indicate that people have lost interest in this particular autograph. Eighteen thousand dollars seems about enough for a mere signature, but that price is determined solely by the number of people who want it. Since the discovery of several unknown Gwinnett signatures within the last two years, there seems to be a possibility of com-

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pleting some sets of Signers which had been started and given up as a hopeless quest because of the rarity of Gwinnett and Lynch signatures.

There has been one notably important book sale already this season — that of Charles Plumptre Johnson and English books, prints and letters from T. Fisher Unwin, Remsen Whitehouse, H. J. Swinburne Bailey and others. At this sale a copy of Kipling's suppressed work, "The Smith Administration", brought $14,000, which is not only the highest price ever paid for a Kipling item, but the highest for a first edition of any living author. The original manuscript of Oscar Wilde's "The Duchess of Padua" fetched $3,850, and an unpublished Keats letter with the first four stanzas of the song "To Sorrow", brought $6,600. The Hollingsworth sale held at Anderson's brought into the market some extraordinarily rare and valuable historical letters and documents. Mr. Hollingsworth, a Boston paper manufacturer, had been a collector for many years, and his books, which included some of the rarest of Americana, were sold privately after his death two years ago. The autographs which were dispersed at auction contained two full sets of signatures of the Signers of the Declaration, many important letters of George Washington, and letters and documents of nearly all the prominent participants in the American Revolution. Mr. Hollingsworth began buying autographs to extra-illustrate some of his books. Soon he began to realize that the autographs he was getting were worth more than the books he proposed to put them into, and he became perforce an autograph collector. At least fifty items in the sale, at which high prices were realized, were of great importance to historians, and bore directly on important events in the building of our new nation.

An increasingly important feature of the Christmas period among book collectors was the exchange of seasonable greetings in the form of privately printed little books or

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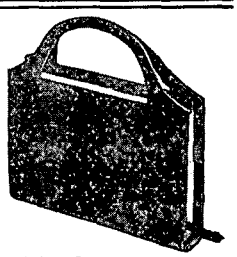

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Books about books continue to multiply. One of the latest is published by R. R. Bowker Company, and is entitled "How to Buy and Sell Rare Books". It is the work of Morris R. Briggs, and is intended as a guide to booksellers who are to enter into this fascinating line of book-selling. Dr. Rosenbach's articles in the *Saturday Evening Post* and the *Atlantic Monthly* have been gathered into a handsome volume with the title of "Books and Bidders" in which the world's greatest bookseller tells some of his personal experiences. "English Books 1475–1900" is the title of two volumes by Charles J. Sawyer, the London dealer, and F. J. Harvey Darton, writer and publisher. "Byways Among English Books", published in this country by Stokes, is another English work, a little volume by Cyril Davenport, late of the British Museum. And there are others. Surely the book collector has guidance enough these days, if he has any time to spend in collecting books after reading all the guides.

Under the time-worn title of "The Golden Book" appears from the press of Pascal Covici the story of fine books and book-making by Douglas C. McMurtrie. Covering, as it does, the history of printing from the origin of the alphabet to modern typography and its leading exponents, the book gives a bird's-eye view that has all of the fascination and none of the blemishes of a close-up. A hurried glimpse at its illustrations reveals an example of Asiatic block printing of 1187, the Breydenbach Frontispiece Woodcut, and an engraved portrait of William Caslon. As a reference volume alone it has earned its right to the title.

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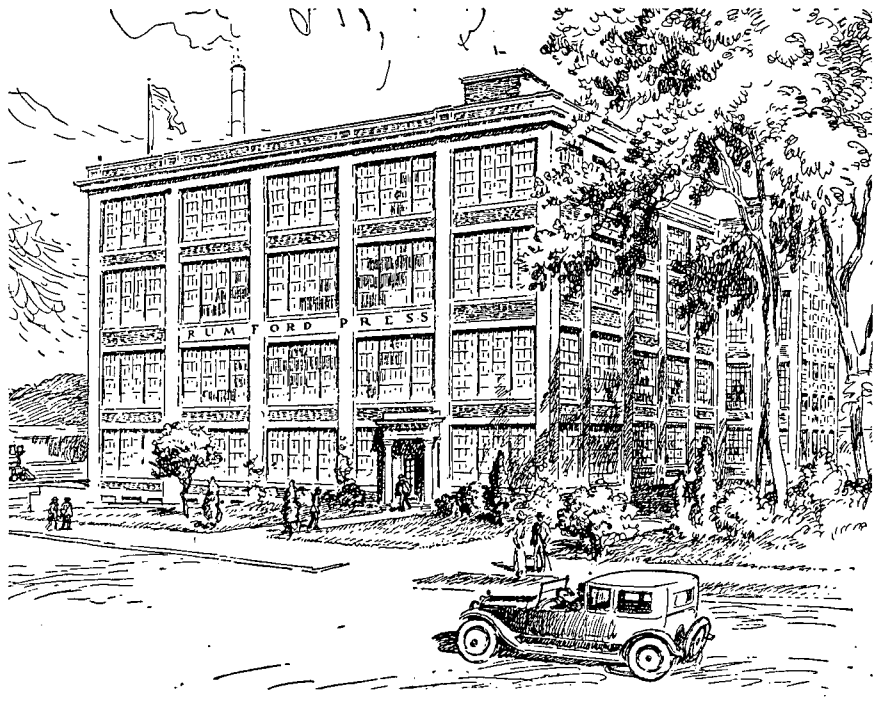

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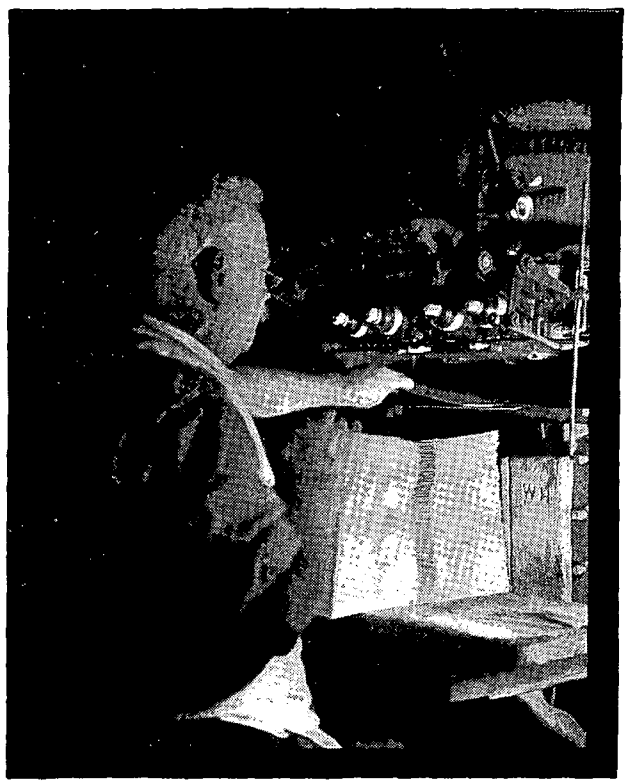

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